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November 17, 1896.

No. 1008.

\$2.50
a Year.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY BEADLE AND ADAMS.

No. 92 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK.

Price,
5 cents.

Vol XXXIX.



OR,
Kid ♣ ♣
Keene's
\$50,000
Snap. ♣

"COME NOW, OLD MAN, HOW MUCH WILL YOU LET ME HAVE ON THAT?"
ASKED KEENE OF THE PAWNBROKER.

THE DENVER DETECTIVE IN NEW YORK;

OR,

Kid Keene's \$50,000 Snap.

BY HOWARD M. BOYNTON,
AUTHOR OF "DETECTIVE GERMAN JOE," "OKLAHOMA OL," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

FROM DENVER TO NEW YORK.

A WELL-DRESSED young man, around whose broad shoulders swung a light leathern sachel, walked out of the Central Railroad Station at Denver, and started up the hill toward the Weldon House, which was at that time the most prominent hotel in the city. He was of medium size, and, while not to outward appearance ostentatious in any way, yet seemed to attract attention as he walked along. His handsome face was somewhat distinguished by a dark, drooping mustache, and a slouch hat set squarely on his head.

But if he noticed the attention paid him, he made no signs of it as he strode rapidly along, occasionally bowing to an acquaintance, or pausing to shake hands with a friend. He reached the hotel in a few minutes, and walked to the clerk's desk.

"Is Weldon in?"

"Mr. Weldon is at dinner," the rather effeminate-looking man behind the counter said, with slight emphasis on the first word.

The new-comer swung the sachel from his shoulder to the floor, and then asked in that same quiet yet always convincing way of his:

"Will you please tell Jack that I would like to see him—Kid Keene, you know."

It was had enough to address the proprietor of the great hotel by his last name, but to deliberately designate the famous John Weldon as plain "Jack" almost took the clerk's breath away.

"I shall have to insist, sir, that you speak respectfully of Mr. Weldon," he said, drawing himself up with dignity. "Otherwise I shall pay no attention to your requests."

The stranger twisted the waving ends of his mustache, to hide a smile, and then picked up his sachel.

"Just as you choose," he said, indifferently. "I guess I will be able to— Why, here's Weldon, now; hello, old man, how are you?"

A white-haired old gentleman had just come out into the hotel corridor, and catching sight of the new-comer, rushed toward him with extended hand.

"Well, Keen, are you here already?" he asked, with manifest delight. "I didn't expect you until to-morrow."

"And I didn't expect to get here until to-morrow, when I first received your telegram, but I managed to put other business aside, and—here I am, very much at your service."

"So I see. Now come up to my room and I'll tell you why I sent for you, and what I want you to do."

The two walked up the grand stairway together, while the effeminate clerk looked on in wonder.

"Can it be that he's really the detective, Kid Keen?" he asked himself. "And if he is, I wonder what the deuce he's doing here."

But no one was present to answer the question, so he decided the first part of it in the affirmative for himself, and postponed indefinitely the latter part.

The two men, meanwhile, had reached the private apartments of the hotel owner on the second floor, and here they both took seats.

"Have you been very busy lately?" asked Weldon. "I saw in the papers of your running down the principal in that celebrated New York murder case with young Vinton."

"Yes," replied Keen, "I have been East several times of late."

"And you understand the ins and outs of life in New York City pretty well, I suppose?"

"I think so," answered the detective, always averse to speaking of his own knowledge or ability.

"Then you're just the man I want, for I didn't care to place this case in the hands of some detective in the East of whom I knew nothing, because it's somewhat of a personal nature."

"I think I will be able to manage it as far as my acquaintance with New York goes," said the detective.

"That is well, for the whole thing centers there."

The old gentleman arose and walked to a desk standing near one of the windows in the room, and took therefrom a photograph. He handed it to the detective, and watched the latter's features closely as he inspected the picture.

"She doesn't look very much like a criminal, eh, Keen?" he said.

"Not a bit of it," replied the other, with emphasis. "But she's most almighty good-looking."

"She is that," replied Weldon with something like a sigh as he resumed his seat. "And yet I want you to go in chase of that girl and bring back fifty thousand dollars of mine which she stole from me a week ago."

"What!"

"A fact."

"She stole fifty thousand dollars from you?"

"Just so."

"I don't believe it."

Weldon shrugged his shoulders, and made another visit to his desk, quickly returning with a letter, which he opened and laid before the detective.

"Read that," he said.

Keen took up the paper and ran his eyes down the delicately written lines.

Here it is:

"DEAR CAL:—

"I have the sachel and contents as desired, and will meet you on the 11:50 train for the East to-night. That will get us in New York City by Tuesday afternoon. The plans you suggest as to our marriage are of course satisfactory to me. I do hope Mr. Weldon will not miss the sachel until we are well off, and I have become Mrs. Clarence Carthay. But, as you say, it is necessary that we act cautiously in this matter. Don't make a mistake in the time—11:50 to-night, at the Central Station."

"Yours affectionately, BON."

"Well?" said Weldon, interrogatively, "what do you think of that?"

The detective shook his head and returned the missive.

"Tell me the story, and then I will be able to judge of the girl's guilt, perhaps. This letter certainly looks bad, if she wrote it."

"I'm absolutely sure of that," Weldon said.

"I saw her write it."

"Very well, then; go on with the story."

The old gentleman crossed his legs, cleared his throat, and began:

"Of course, Keen, fifty thousand dollars is not as much to me now as it was when I used to know you down in Kansas, and we both earned twenty dollars a month punching cattle. But still, under these circumstances, I don't dare to let the matter go by without making a determined effort toward recovering it. For one thing, as I said before, I feel a personal interest in the poor girl who has been led astray."

"A week ago, I drew from the Denver bank fifty thousand dollars in cash. It was mostly in large bills, but made quite a package altogether, and so I bought a small black sachel in which to keep them until a few days later, when I intended to pay off the men who have been building my new house around on Pierce street. The sachel I placed in that desk by the window on the very day on which I received the money."

"At the time there was stopping in this hotel the young lady whose photograph I have just showed you. She was remarkably pretty, and as good and honest a girl, I thought, as ever lived. She had been here for nearly a month, keeping very much by herself, but still making friends with every one who knew her."

"With me she was especially frank, and told me all about herself. She said her mother was dead, and that her father was a wealthy merchant in New York City. She had come to Denver because the old gentleman would not let her marry some young fellow there, and he—the young fellow, I mean—was coming out here pretty soon, and the knot was to be tied in the hotel."

"Well, time went by, and pretty soon the day came when I drew the money from the bank. After placing it in the desk, I locked it, and also the room door, and went about my usual business. When I came back—"

"I suppose the money was gone," said the detective, with a smile.

The old man shook his head.

"No, the money was still there, but Bonnie—that was the young lady's name then—stood at the door, rapping. When she saw me coming along the hall, she said she would like to go in

and use my desk to write a letter, and that she had thought I was in the room. Of course I said she could use my desk whenever she wanted to, and so I unlocked the room door and opened the desk. The sachel was in an inner drawer of the concern, and not visible even when the top was shoved back. But to make sure that the money was all right, I opened the drawer. It lay there secure enough, and I went to the windows in the opposite end of the room, and sat with my back to the desk, reading a paper. The girl took a seat by it and wrote for a few minutes, and then got up and left the room."

"Presently I finished the paper and went to the desk, pulled the roll top down and locked it, as I also did the room door when I went out. During the remainder of the day I went about my usual duties, and at night, as I was going down stairs to the office, I found lying on the floor the letter which Bonnie had written on my desk. I knew it was the same, for I had seen her address the envelope, which was already stamped and ready for mailing, and besides I knew the writing very well, having seen letters sent to the same person before. I put the envelope in my pocket, intending to hand it to her or mail it when I went down town, but I forgot all about it for the time being, and not until the next day, when the girl's sudden disappearance alarmed my suspicions, did I think of the letter. Then I opened it, and saw what its contents were."

"It is almost needless for me to add that the sachel was gone."

The old gentleman concluded his story, and then began to pace nervously up and down the room. The detective also arose, and with his hands in his pockets sauntered toward the window, his mind busy with the story he had just heard.

"The name of the man to whom the letter was addressed was Clarence Carthay, was it not?" he asked, presently.

"Yes," responded Weldon.

"And it was to be sent to him at the general post-office of Denver?"

"Yes."

"Will you let me have the letter and envelope, and also the girl's photograph?" asked Keen.

"Certainly," said Weldon, handing over the articles mentioned; which the young detective immediately stowed away in the sachel.

"Now if you will let me examine the room in which the girl lived while she was stopping here, we will be about ready to commence our work."

Weldon led the way up to the next floor and conducted Keen into a cozily-furnished room, facing the street.

"When she left she had paid me every cent she owed me for board," the proprietor of the hotel said. "She packed up all of her belongings in a small trunk and had that sent down to the station by one of the porters. There is absolutely nothing in the room now which belongs to her, so that you won't find any clues here."

And he was about right. Keen searched the room thoroughly, but with no result, and presently announced himself as satisfied with the amount of information with which Weldon had supplied him.

"If I can't run down the real thief on what you have told me, I sha'n't return to Denver," he said, as he prepared to leave the hotel. "I'll keep you posted on my movements by telegraph whenever it is necessary, and you may expect to get the girl and the money at almost any time."

"There is one thing more which perhaps will help you. The sachel containing the money is small and stout, and bound with brass. On one side two brass letters, 'I' and 'W' are fastened."

"All right, anything else?"

"Not that I can think of now."

"Well, then, *au revoir*."

A moment later Keen was swinging along back toward the Central Station, and at night when the 11:50 train for "New York and the East" pulled out, he was settled comfortably in a seat in a parlor car.

And what surprised him greatly was the appearance of the effeminate-looking clerk of the Weldon House, seated a short distance in front of him.

"That's the fellow who objected to my calling Weldon by his first name," the detective said to himself. "I wonder what he's doing here and why he left his post at the hotel so suddenly? I guess I'll keep my eye on him if he goes through."

CHAPTER II.

KID KEEN ARRIVES IN GOTHAM.

THE former clerk at the Weldon Hotel "went through." He traveled in the same car with the detective from Denver to New York, and as Keen had himself taken the quickest and most direct route East, it was very easy to see that the man was in a hurry to get away from Denver. The detective did not allow the clerk to catch sight of him on the long journey, for although he knew nothing against the fellow, it behooved him to treat his sudden departure with suspicion. It might even be, he thought, that the man had something to do with the girl's disappearance, and in that case he had better keep his eye on him as long as possible.

And he did.

The train in which they both had traveled reached New York City on the following Sunday, quite late in the evening. The clerk walked out of the Grand Central Station with the detective close upon his heels and took a street car going down-town on the nearest avenue. Kid Keen took the one following it, and on the front platform, he watched the other until the man he was following left it and walked across town to a popular hotel.

Here he registered the name of "James T. Manton, St. Joseph, Mo.," and under it the detective placed that of "Daniel Gibbons, Hartford, Conn." Now that the man was seeking to conceal his identity under a false residence, if not under an assumed name, Keen's suspicions were thoroughly aroused, and he felt sure that he was upon the direct track of the stolen money.

Manton carried his satchel to his room up-stairs and returned some minutes later without it. Then he again took a street car down-town, while Keen, who had also left his grip at the hotel, followed him on the next one. The clerk went down Broadway as far as Canal street, evidently inquiring his way from the conductor, and walked into that thoroughfare some distance toward the east side of the city.

"He's getting into a pretty bad neighborhood," the detective said as he gripped his stout cane and followed the clerk. "I'll bet he's not here for any good purpose—hello!"

Just then Manton turned suddenly into a side street, and when Keen reached it he had disappeared.

"Must have gone into some of these old houses along here," the shadow said, and at that minute a door slamming in one of them caused him to turn his attention toward it. A light flickering between the slats of a half-closed blind on the second floor seemed to make this surmise more certain, and he walked further down the street and then across.

The house in question was a shabby-looking structure no better nor worse than hundreds of others in its vicinity. In the basement a pawnbroker kept a store, and three faded yellow balls swung on a creaking sign outside as an evidence of the fact. The upper part of the house was shrouded in darkness, except where, between the shutters on the second floor, gleamed occasional flashes of light. The only visible entrance to this uninviting abode, was a stout front door, reached from the street by half-a-dozen steps, and bearing in its center the figures "133"—evidently its street number.

All these things the detective noted, and then he hastened down into the basement, and opened the door of the pawnbroker's shop. It was dimly lit up by a flickering gas-jet behind the narrow counter, and under it sat a small, hunch-backed man counting a large pile of banknotes.

As Keen entered he brushed these hastily together and thrust his hand suggestively under the counter.

"Vat you want?" he asked in a hoarse voice, glaring at the detective with anything but a pleasant look.

"I'd like to pawn this," Keen said, taking from his scarf a handsome solitaire diamond pin.

"What can you let me have on it?"

The hunchback by this time had placed the greenbacks into a small iron safe behind him. He was in a better humor then, and he reached out his claw-like fingers for the valuable bit of jewelry.

"You want to sell or pawn?" he asked, looking at his customer sharply.

"Pawn," answered Keen.

"You vhas steal it in der city?"

"No."

"Near yere?"

"I didn't steal it at all."

A coarse laugh from the pawnbroker followed this remark.

"You no steal, eh?"

"I did not."

"Then v'y you no pawn it in better place? Bigger prices on Broadway, eh?"

He leaned over to punch the detective familiarly in the ribs, but Keen managed to elude him.

"Come, now, old man, just let me know how much you'll let me have on that. It doesn't make any difference to you whether I stole it or not, I guess."

"Nusser, not a bit—not a bit."

The man looked to see if there was anything on the counter that his customer could take possession of, and discovering that there was not, he turned his back on Keen and closely inspected the diamond under the gas-jet.

The detective took a good look about him, but could see nothing that would help him in his desire to get within hearing distance of the persons up-stairs. The lower end of the room was shut off by a greasy curtain, and if any stairs led from the basement to the other floors, it must be situated behind it somewhere.

"Four dollars," finally announced the hunchback.

Keen could not repress a smile as he extended his hand over the counter.

"No take?" asked the man, seemingly surprised.

"I should think not. Four dollars for a diamond which cost a hundred times as much. I guess not, old man; hand it over, and I'll try somewhere else."

The hunchback looked at it again.

"I might make it seven tollars unt fifty cendts," he said, doubtfully. "You won't take—say ten tollars?"

"No, no," exclaimed Keen, impatiently; "two hundred dollars or nothing."

He would have made it a thousand rather than let the pin go. You can imagine his surprise, therefore, when he saw the man behind the counter begin to unlock the safe.

"Dodt vhas pooty high price fur sooch a tiamondt, budt uf you no steal it, I vill go mit you on dodt pasis, don't it? You vanta ticket?"

"Yes, of course," Keen answered. "I mean to take it out soon."

The pawnbroker counted out two hundred dollars in greenbacks, and then wrote out on a slip of yellow card-board the name which Keen gave him and the amount of his loan. Having done so, he extended the paper and the bills toward the detective, who thrust them both in his pocket with a carelessness that surprised the hunchback.

As the detective turned to go, the other leaned further over the counter and said, confidentially:

"See here, mine fr'ent, you efer play mit der bank?"

"What's that?" asked Keen, innocently.

"You nefer gamble?"

"Oh, yes. I play sometimes. Do you run a game here?"

"Hush! Don't make so mooch noise. There vhas a fine game going on oop-thairs all der time. Vat you play—faro, roulette, ret unt black, eh?"

"Anything goes with me," the shadow answered, with carelessness, although he was very anxious to get up on the second story.

"Ten you vill play—anything?" asked the other, eagerly.

"Oh, I suppose I might blow in a few dollars. You show me the way up."

The hunchback walked nimbly from behind the counter and drew apart the curtains.

"Foller me," he said, and Keen proceeded to do so.

They walked along the narrow rear room, whose shelved sides were covered with bundles and packages of all sorts, containing merchandise which had been pawned with the hunchback during the many years in which he had conducted business at "133." Then he led the way up two flights of stairs, and at the top of the second paused before a heavy, closed door.

"Ikey, I say Ikey, vhas you dere?" he asked, rapping lightly.

Almost instantly the slide covering a small hole in the center of the door was pushed aside, and the crook-nose and black eyes of "Ikey" appeared.

"Vhas dodt you, Sol?"

"Yaw; I haf a man who vants to play mit der bank, ain't it?"

"Ikey" now screwed his eyes around until they fell on the detective. He evidently did not like Keen's looks, for he exchanged some words with the hunchback in German. At the end of their discussion, however, he opened the door, and the shadow was admitted, while the pawnbroker descended once more to his den below.

The room in which the detective found himself was very long and wide and handsomely furnished. Along one end extended a handsome bar, with enough mirror and cut glass displayed about it to dazzle a person gazing directly at it. In the center of the room were scattered a half-dozen round, green-covered tables, about which men were playing poker, seven-up, "bull," and other games which did not require a dealer, while on the sides were arranged a row of faro, red and black and roulette-tables. Altogether, it was one of the largest and best conducted gambling-houses in New York City.

"Vat you play?" asked Ikey, taking a more careful survey of Keen than was possible through the small hole in the door.

"I'll tackle faro, I guess," the shadow said, drawing out the roll of bills he had received down-stairs, and walking with a swagger toward the nearest table. He had taken careful note of the half-hundred occupants of the room, before making himself visible, to see whether or not Manton was among them. He was not there, and the detective resolved to play moderately until he appeared, for he was quite certain that the clerk had not yet left the house. He had not yet become convinced, either, that the man had gone to the place merely for the sake of gambling. There were so many other houses nearer the hotel, that the clerk must have had some inducement to enter this one. Possibly he was to have met there some one connected with the Weldon House robbery.

At any rate, Keen decided to await his return, and in case he did not come back, to make direct inquiry about him.

So he took a seat at the faro-table, bought one hundred dollars' worth of chips, and with all the recklessness of an old gambler began to "play mit der bank." Keen was one of those fellows whose experience in life had adapted him to the performance of almost everything in the line of criminal life. And in fact there is no good detective in existence whose chief trait is not his ability to portray correctly the very class of persons whom he is expected to run down.

The shadow had not played long before the whole room was thrown into a state of excitement.

CHAPTER III.

LUCK AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.)

"GREAT Schott!"

"Py shimminy!"

"Holy Moses!"

"Vell, I nefer!"

"Lordt a'mighty!"

These and other choice German evidences of surprise came from the faro-table at which Kid Keen was playing. The gambling-house was frequented by that class of people almost entirely. Even the dealers betrayed by their face and accent their Hebrew blood.

"Dodt breaks der bank."

"No, idt don't."

"Mighty near id."

"Come now, gentlemen," said the detective, "just give me room to stand my chips please. These are worth twenty-five dollars apiece, and I can't afford to lose them. Hello, I win again. I am having fairly good luck to-night. This is my first play here, and I suppose—there I go again, and by gad! I've got all the chips on the table!"

"Dodt's throe," groaned the dealer. "Dis game shuts down fer to-day, ain't it? I vonder v'y in blank Ikey vhas fool enough to ledt you in."

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Keen, nonchalantly chewing a toothpick as he counted over the chips.

"Dese perfessional men always pu'st me," continued the dealer, trying to steady his voice. "We only play a quiet, shentleman's game here, unt ve oughtn't ter allow you high rollers ter coome in, don't it."

"I guess you're right," returned Keen, with a nod, as he leaned back on his chair. "I make out forty-two hundred and twenty-five dollars in all. Just count the chips over and see if that's right."

The dealer did so, and finally and reluctantly announced that the detective's mathematics were correct.

"Vill you ledt some uf t'is go ofer until you call again?" he asked.

"No, sir," replied the shadow. "I won it square, didn't I?"

"I'm afrait you did."

"Then hand over the money—in large bills if you've got them."

The crooked-nosed dealer opened the cash-drawer at his side and emptied the pile of bills it contained before Keen.

"Dare they be, big unt leetle together. I'd be mighty glad ter take 'em shmall, uf idt vhas me."

The detective saw that the greenbacks in front of him were nearly if not exactly equal to the pile of chips, so he rolled them up in a dozen bundles and stowed them away in all the pockets of his clothing. Then he arose, bid the dealer a cordial "good-night," and walked toward the door, the center of observation of the other gamblers.

Ikey regarded him with sullen interest, and was surprised when Keen handed him a fifty-dollar bill.

"I say, Ikey, have you seen here to-night a tall, thin man, with red hair and long red side-whiskers? He wore a high hat and was dressed in dark clothes."

Ikey pocketed the bill, and answered with at least a suspicion of amiableness:

"Nusser."

"What's down-stairs?"

"I dunno."

"Does any one live there?"

"Never until a week ergo."

"Did some one move there then?"

"Yep."

"Who were they?"

"I dunno."

"Man and wife, I mean, or only two men?"

"There's several men goes in an' out, unt occasionally a woman."

"How do you get down there?"

"Go down-shstairs 'unt take der steps on der left."

"All right, thank you."

Keen walked down the stairs, and was feeling his way along the dark passageway, when suddenly, without the slightest warning, he was set upon by a half-dozen men.

Whack! Whack!

His cane went whizzing through the air and two of his assailants went out of sight in the pitch darkness which surrounded them. Then the other four made a combined and vigorous attack upon him, and although his fist and heavy cane did excellent work he was thrown to the floor.

Even then he struggled, and getting his legs free he used them effectively, and sent one of the men flying into space. But by the time that individual had fallen heavily to the floor some distance away, his companions had finished their work, and presently the shadow lay securely bound upon the floor.

Then, for the first time he saw the object of the assault. The men intended to go through his clothing, and began to take therefrom the money he had won up-stairs. But before they had secured a single dollar, a door at the end of the hall opened and some one came out.

The assailants, who were evidently not professional robbers, but respectable gamblers who had taken these means of retrieving their wrecked fortunes, now turned and ran down-stairs, fearful lest the persons approaching should discover them in their nefarious work. They left Keen lying at one side of the hall, unable to move an inch.

"What's that?" exclaimed a voice which the detective immediately recognized as belonging to the man he had chased from Denver. "Did you hear those men running down-stairs, Cal?"

"Yes," answered another voice, and the two men stopped within a foot of the shadow.

"This was the only place where I could secure rooms in this part of the city. It isn't a very desirable place, for there's a big gambling-den up-stairs, and we're likely to get raided by the police at any moment."

"Then those fellows who just ran out were gamblers?"

"They must have been, I guess. I've got the four small rooms on this floor while the rest of the house is occupied by the gamblers. A Jew pawnbroker hangs out in the basement."

"All right then, let's be going. You're sure the sachel is all safe in there?"

"Oh, yes, I think so. No one here interferes with other persons' rooms. The girl is only a short distance away and we will soon be back."

Then the two continued their journey down-stairs, and the detective was left alone. He was very much surprised at his good fortune in discovering the thieves so quickly, for when he started out, it was with no hopes of running upon them within an hour of his arrival in New York. But here he was, evidently within a stone's throw of John Weldon's money, and if once he could get his hands free he thought he would be able to wind up the case very readily. He tugged on the cords which bound him with all the strength he was capable of, but they were secure even if hastily applied, and he soon

perceived that he could never hope to obtain freedom through his own exertions.

Then he was more than half inclined to yell for assistance, but it was as likely as not that the person or persons he alarmed would take advantage of his position and rob instead of releasing him. So he lay still, hoping against hope that some good Samaritan would pass through the dark hall and sever his bonds.

"Just to think that I'm fairly in sight of the money stolen from Weldon, and yet those highwaymen have got me tied up so that I can't move," he said to himself. "I guess they were frightened off, though, before they got any of the money. If once I was— Hello! here comes some one up-stairs, and, by George, it's a woman!"

A light footfall was approaching in the darkness, and he resolved to take advantage of the opportunity thus offered and make known his whereabouts. The woman reached the hall in which he lay, and her dress brushed his face before he spoke.

"Here, please," he said. "I have been tied and can't—"

A girlish scream followed his first word, and the figure ran down the hall.

"It's all right," Keen continued, reassuringly. "Some men whom I met in the hall here a while ago tried to rob me, but were frightened off. I'm all bound up with cords, and if you'll untie me, I'll be ever so much obliged, and—"

"All right," responded a melodious voice. "You frightened me so much at first that I was afraid to come near you. I knew this was a dreadful place, but I didn't think they ever treated people like this. You ought not to have come here."

She knelt down by the captive's side, and Keen could feel that her hands were plump and soft as she untied the many cords which bound him. When he arose at last, and stretched his arms and legs, he said, heartily:

"I'm very glad you happened along so timely. If you'll allow me to present you—"

"No, no," said his deliverer. "I don't want anything, and I would advise you to get out of here as soon as possible."

"I know; but then I came here on business of a nature that will not allow of my leaving at present. If I'm not mistaken, you are concerned in it."

"I?"

"I think so. Is not your name Bonnie, and did you not leave Denver last Sunday— By George, she's fainted!"

Without uttering a word or giving a sign, the girl had sunk down to the floor unconscious.

"It must be she," Keen said, as he knelt hastily down. "But what shall I do now?"

He picked up one of her hands and began to rub it vigorously. As he did so, a key fell from it.

"That must unlock these rooms here," he said, grasping the bit of metal and rising. "If it does, we'll soon have this thing settled."

He approached the door through which Manton and Cal had passed some time before, and was successful in unlocking it with the key the girl had dropped. The interior was plainly furnished and lit with a gas-jet in the center of the room. On one side stood a sofa, and he at once returned to the hall and carried inside the unconscious form of the young lady.

Then he looked about him for something with which to resuscitate her, and finding a pitcher of water in an adjoining room, returned with it, and began bathing the face and forehead of the girl.

As he did so, he made the discovery that, although nearly as young and pretty as the other, she was not the original of the photograph he had received from John Weldon.

CHAPTER IV

AN ADVENTURE IN "133."

KEEN was very much astonished when he made the discovery, but not disconcerted by any means. He was busily engaged in trying to bring the girl back to life when he heard heavy footsteps on the hall stairs, and Manton's voice was distinctly audible.

He at once set down the pitcher of water, and made a dive for the door. Then seeing that escape was cut off in that direction he sprang through a door in the side of the room and found himself in a closet, on one side of which was a small elevator or, as it is more familiarly known, dumb-waiter with two shelves, which ran through all the stories of the building for the purpose of

carrying up and down coal and other merchandise used by the tenants.

The other side was built up with shelves, and contained several bottles and numerous other articles. Keen grasped the knob and drew the door shut a second before Cal and Manton walked in.

"Strange the girl wasn't home—and curse me if the door of the room ain't open now!"

There was a rush of feet across the hall floor and the two men ran into the room.

"Great God! Cal, who's that?"

"What—where?"

"On the sofa—a girl—is she dead?"

"No, only fainted."

"And the sachel?"

"Here it is, all right."

"But who's this girl, and how in thunderation did she come here?"

"I give it up. Get some water and we'll bring her to—why, Dick, some one has been here as sure as fate. The girl's face is wet and there stands the pitcher we left in the next room."

By this time Kid Keen had crowded himself between the two shelves of the dumb-waiter and with his hands on the guide-rope, was prepared to lower himself if the closet door should be opened. He chuckled to himself when he saw what a convenient arrangement it was.

He could hear plainly what was going on in the large room.

"I tell you, Dick, that there has been some funny work here," Cal said. "How do you suppose that girl got in this room?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"And why did she faint, and who's been using our water to bring her back to consciousness?"

Manton again expressed his ignorance.

"See if there is a key in the door," said Cal.

"There isn't," replied the clerk.

"Then look through the rooms here and see what you can find?"

Keen lowered himself out of sight and Manton's inspection of the closet disclosed nothing. The key with which he had entered was resting securely in the detective's pocket. The clerk went through the other rooms with a like result.

"No one is hiding in any of them," he announced. "And the money is in the sachel up the chimney just where we hid it."

"It's mighty strange," said Cal.

"It is indeed," replied Manton. "Have you ever seen this girl before?"

"Never."

"Nor I."

"I don't see where she could have gotten the key. Bonnie and I each had one, and I've got mine now."

"Then you suspect the girl?"

"No. She's all right."

The girl on the sofa was gradually showing signs of returning consciousness. She had not yet opened her eyes, but she felt the cool water on her face and evidently thought that it was the man whom she untied in the hall that was caring for her.

"How do you come to know anything about Bonnie Franklin?" she asked in a shaky voice. "And why have you followed her from Denver?"

At the girl's words Cal staggered back with an oath, while Manton nearly fell to the floor through fright and surprise.

"What's that?" asked the former, looking at the girl's pale face in utter bewilderment. "I'd like to have you tell us what you know about Bonnie Franklin."

The girl's eyes remained closed and her lips parted with a sigh as she replied:

"Did I not understand you to say that you were here on business concerning Bonnie?"

"No, sir," answered Cal with truth and emphasis. "We did not; eh, Dick?"

The clerk shook his head. He was too much surprised to make a verbal reply.

"Then what did you say after I untied you?" she asked, her feeble voice growing a trifle stronger.

"Untied who—what—when?"

The girl raised one white hand to her head and rubbed her eyes.

"You frightened me so much when you spoke of Bonnie that I fainted. Where am I now?"

"She's crazy," said Cal.

"I doubt it," replied Manton, who had taken a seat so as not to lose the support of his legs. "She seems straight enough, but how in the world has she learned all this about Bonnie and Denver?"

"I don't know," the other said. "But she won't leave this room till we find out."

The young lady on the sofa was evidently satisfied in her own mind that she was addressing

the proper party, while Kid Keen, in the dumb waiter, was listening to every word. The effects of her faint had about worn off now, and the girl opened her blue eyes, and looked up at Cal. She did not see Manton.

"Don't you remember, sir, saying that you were there looking for Bonnie?" she asked.

"I can't say that I do," Cal replied, truthfully enough.

The girl frowned.

"But surely, sir, you remember my untying you out in the hall?"

"Nary an untie."

"You must be crazy to have forgotten it so soon. And you told me then that you could not leave this house because business of importance, in which Bonnie was interested, would keep you here. The robbers had tied you, you know."

But Cal didn't know, and the girl was lost in wonder at his dense ignorance.

"Can it be," she said, this time sitting up and looking about, "that you are not the man?"

"That's it, I guess," replied Cal.

"Then who was it?"

"I'd like to find out for myself."

"You don't know then?"

"No."

The girl stood up with a perceptible stagger, and straightened her disarranged bonnet.

"It's very strange," she said, more to herself than to Cal. "I certainly remember untying a man out there in the hall, and when he spoke of Bonnie I fainted. If it was not you, why then—"

She hesitated and moved toward the door, which had been discreetly closed and locked by Manton.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Cal. "There are some questions which we want to ask you before you leave."

The girl paused with her hand on the door-knob and faced him.

"In the first place, we would like to know why you came here."

The girl made no reply.

"Also, how did you get the key with which to unlock that door?"

Still no reply.

"And why is it that you faint when you untie a man, and he speaks of Bonnie Franklin and Denver? These things, my dear, must be explained, and the quicker you explain them, the better it will be for all of us."

"I have nothing to say," answered the girl, in a frightened yet quiet tone of voice. "I don't understand myself what has happened," and she rubbed both hands across her forehead as if to clear away the mist.

"But you must know where you got the key and why you came here," Cal persisted. "We're as much puzzled as you are over the man in the hall story."

At the mention of "we" the girl caught sight of Manton, and as she did so, her mind seemed to clear somewhat.

"I see how it is now," she said, shaking the door. "I did not know he had left Denver."

She nodded toward the former clerk of the Weldon House, and Manton's surprise was now increased tenfold.

"Now see here, girl, we've stood enough of this mystery. You'll have to tell us what you are driving at before you leave this room. We shan't have any more of this fooling. Now sit down and tell us all about it and we'll let you go. Otherwise—we won't."

The girl drew herself up, and released her hold on the door-knob, as she replied firmly:

"I shan't tell you a thing. I know who you are now, but I didn't before, and I'd die before saying anything."

"All right, my bird. We'll have to search you for the key."

"Sir!"

She turned her flashing eyes full upon Cal, but he never quailed.

"I'm sorry to do it, my dear, but as long as you refuse to answer my civil questions, we must refuse to treat you according to the strict rules of etiquette. Have you the key?"

"No, sir."

"Did you bring it with you or did the man you dreamt about untying in the hall have it?"

"I had it, but when I fainted I must have dropped it and he used it to unlock the door. I carried it up-stairs in my hand."

"And you won't say where it is?"

"No, but I can assure you that it's not about me now."

Cal looked doubtful for a moment, and then said:

"All right, I'll take your word for it, but now I'll have to let you have Bon— I mean the room over at the end there to stop in. We won't

let you go until you tell us all about this little matter here to-night."

"Then you mean to keep me locked up here?"

"Until you are willing—"

"I shall not say a word about it."

"Then come on. Excuse my locking the door, but you are a prisoner of war now and we must use force in such cases."

The detective, sitting comfortably in the dumb-waiter, heard Cal conduct the girl to the furthest of the four rooms which he held possession of, and after locking the door return to Manton.

"She's safe enough for the present," he said, throwing himself out on the sofa. "But how in the name of all that's wonderful did she get here?"

"And who the deuce is she?" inquired Manton.

"I'm sure I don't know. She knows who you are."

"She seems to know considerable about the whole business," replied the clerk. "I'll be teetotally durned if I can see head or tail to this thing. Suppose we make one more trip over to Bonnie's and see if she knows anything about all this. She certainly ought to be home by this time, at least."

"I guess that would be a good idea. Unlock the door and we'll go over."

The detective heard them go out into the hall and he at once began to lower himself in the dumb-waiter, intending to find them on the street if possible, and follow them to Bonnie's residence. Down he went, hand over hand, until he thought he must have traveled something like a mile. Then suddenly he struck bottom, or rather the dumb-waiter did, and he went out through the opening at the bottom of the shaft, into a damp, ill-smelling room which he instantly surmised to be the cellar. It was intensely dark, and he struck a match.

By its flickering light he made out a door some distance away, and he hastened toward it. Throwing it open, for it was unlocked, he stepped into the room adjoining the pawnbroker's shop in which were situated the stairs leading to the gambling-rooms on the third story. He quickly parted the greasy curtains and walked out, very much surprising the dozing hunchback behind the counter.

"Vy you coome down mit der back stairs?" he asked. "You no fint der front vons?"

"No," said the detective. "I thought it best to come down the way I went up."

He wondered what the pawnbroker would have said had he known that the detective had descended by means of the dumb-waiter.

"All right, mine fr'ent. How did you coome oudt playin' mit der band?"

"Oh, I won a little. Here's two hundred and fifty dollars and your ticket. Give me my diamond—quick!"

The pawnbroker was almost paralyzed at this exhibition of generosity, but he hastily returned the pin and counted out the money.

"You vhas reckless, don't id?" he said, opening his little iron safe.

But the detective had already gone up the steps leading to the street. As he did so: he caught sight of Cal and Manton hurrying along under the rays of an electric light not far distant.

CHAPTER V. THE MISSING GIRL.

THE detective walked rapidly along, forced to follow almost upon the heels of the two men for fear of losing them in the darkness. They turned a number of corners and passed through so many streets that Keen suddenly thought how impossible it would be for him to get back to "133" in case he should miss them. But it was too late for regrets then, and so he resolved to keep Cal and Manton in sight if he had to follow them to Europe.

They halted finally before a house somewhat more respectable in appearance than the German gambling resort, and in a better neighborhood. The clerk unlocked the front door and the two men entered, closing it behind them.

Keen immediately sprung up the steps and had just laid his hand on the knob when some one came hastily around from the rear of the house. It was a female figure enveloped from head to foot in a dark cloak.

She seemed to be conscious that there was a man on the stoop, for she did not glance in that direction as she walked rapidly away from the house. Keen, of course, could not tell whether or not she had anything to do with the men who had just entered, but he resolved to follow her. A hasty glance over the building for identification at some future time was taken, and then he hurried off after the girl.

On and on she went, crossing and recrossing streets until Keen began to fear that he was on a wild-goose chase. But suddenly the neighborhood through which they were passing became familiar, and the shadow saw the girl go up the steps of "133." She tried the door, and finding it locked, went down into the pawnbroker's shop, with the evident purpose of going up by means of the back stairs.

Keen followed her.

He passed once more into the presence of the hunchback, but could see nothing of the girl.

"Vat, you pack here again?" exclaimed the pawnbroker. "You vant to play mit der bank some more, ain't id?"

"Yes," replied Keen, hurriedly. "I can find my way up, I guess."

"All right."

The detective went through the curtains and was about to go up the stairs, when he thought of the dumb-waiter in which he had descended a short time before. That would carry him right into the private apartments of the men with less risk and less chance of discovery than by using the key which he had secured possession of. He had no doubt now but that the girl had entered "133" on an errand in connection with the two men.

He walked through the narrow room behind the curtains and then into the cellar. There stood the dumb-waiter where he had left it, and he quickly crowded himself inside. It was no easy matter to operate the guide-rope while in that position, but he managed to pull the concern up to the landing in the closet adjoining Cal's rooms.

No sound could be heard from within. It was evident that the men had not yet returned, and the detective resolved upon a bold move.

He quickly shoved himself out of his close quarters in the dumb-waiter and opened the closet-door. No one was visible in the large room. He walked across it, and was just about to go in search of the girl who had fainted, when he heard a rap on the door.

"Come in!" he said, imitating as nearly as possible a feminine voice.

"Is that you, Aimie?"

"No."

He said this in his natural voice, and strode quickly to the door, inserted the key and opened it.

On the threshold stood the girl whose photograph he had received in Denver—Bonnie Franklin.

"Come in, quick!" he said, holding the door open. "The other girl is in here."

Bonnie started back at sight of a stranger, and would have retreated down-stairs, had not Keen said, reassuringly:

"Cal and Manton have gone away—only Aimie and I are here."

"Who are you?" asked the girl, in a frightened tone of voice.

"I was gambling up-stairs, and on coming down some men tried to rob me of what I had won. The girl who had the key to this room unlocked the door and let me in."

This was not the exact truth, but it served his purpose very well, for the girl entered the room and Keen was enabled to get a better look at her.

She was young and exceedingly pretty, with a very pale face, and a frightened, hunted look in her brown eyes.

"Who are you?" she repeated. "And how is it that you know about Cal and Dick and—Aimie?"

"I'll tell you all that later," the detective said hastily. "Just now we must attend to something else. Aimie, if that is the name of the girl who had the key, is locked up in the other room. Cal and the other man came in while she was here, and tried to get her to tell what she knew about you."

"About me?" asked Bonnie.

The detective nodded.

"Cal said that only you and he had a key to these rooms, and thought that you had let the girl have yours."

"And what did she say?"

"Nothing."

"She didn't tell them that I had given her the key?"

"No."

"Thank Heaven!"

"And when she refused to say why she had come here or what she was after, the men forced her in that room and locked the door."

"And she's there yet?"

"Yes, I suppose so. I just came in."

"But where were you all the time? Didn't the men see you?"

"I was hiding and they failed to discover me."

I just came in to liberate Aimie, when you knocked. Now—Hello! here come the men back again. I'll hide; you stay here and face them!"

Heavy footsteps resounded through the quiet hall as Cal and the clerk came back toward the room. The detective had acted impulsively in admitting Bonnie, and he feared, as he resumed his position in the faithful dumb-waiter, that he had made a serious mistake in so doing. The girl was plainly anxious to avoid the men, and here he had brought them together.

"Well, by all that's wonderful!" Cal exclaimed as he entered the large room from the hall. "Here's Bonnie now."

"Good-evening Cal," responded the girl quietly, and the detective could hear by the way she spoke that she was able to make the best of the situation. "Where have you been?"

"We just went over to your boarding-house after you. We've been there twice to-night and you were not at home either time."

"No, I have been out. But what does Mr. Manton want here?"

"He's East on a little business trip."

"And has nothing to do with you?"

"No."

"Very well. I came over to see if everything was moving along all right."

"It is, indeed," replied Cal.

"You have not seen Mark since?"

"No."

"But you won't forget what you are to do for him?"

"Of course not."

"Then I'll go back. Here's my key in the door. When you are ready for—"

The girl halted.

"Yes, I understand. When I'm ready for the ceremony I'll let you know. I've even been thinking of inviting Mark to the nuptials. His jailer would release—"

"Call!"

"All right, my dear, I won't tease you. But I say, Bonnie!"

"Well?"

The girl paused with her hand on the door-knob. The detective, luckily, had not removed the key.

"That's your key you have there, isn't it?"

"It's the one you gave me."

"And you haven't let any other girl have it?"

"A girl?"

"Yes."

"You must be crazy."

"No, I'm not. About half an hour ago when I came in here with Dick there was a girl in here lying in a dead faint on that lounge."

Bonnie looked at him now in genuine surprise. "A girl—fainted?"

"Yes, for a fact. And some one had been here trying to resuscitate her. Dick and I brought her to, and then she took me for a man whom she'd rescued from some robbers out in the hall, and who asked her if she was Bonnie Franklin of Denver. She got off the funniest story you ever see—I couldn't make head nor tail to it."

"Where is she now?"

Cal nodded toward the door leading to the inner rooms.

"I put her in there until she was willing to give some kind of an account of herself. She knew all about you, apparently, and she had a key to the door. It looked so suspicious that I thought we'd better keep her with us for a while. Do you want to see her?"

"No."

"But it may be some young lady whom you know."

"I'm sure it isn't."

"But she had a key to the door, and I tell you that she spoke of you."

"I don't care, Cal, I'm sick of this whole business. Let the girl go, and let's get out of the city ourselves soon."

"We will, dear, as soon as—"

Crash!

A loud noise came from the inside of the adjoining closet, and as Cal walked toward the door, he said:

"Some durned fool has dropped a scuttle of coal off the dumb-waiter."

CHAPTER VI.

THE VICTIM OF A CONSPIRACY.

It was not a scuttle of coal, but something much more lively as well as weighty which had "dropped." Kid Keen had been carefully listening to the conversation between Bonnie and Cal and holding on to the guide-rope with both hands, when suddenly some one above him be-

gan to pull up the dumb-waiter. They evidently found that it was no easy job, and then let go as quickly as they had seized the rope.

The result was that the detective fell to the bottom of the shaft with more speed than comfort. He landed in the cellar with a crash which could be heard all over the building, and just as he was about to crawl out of the dumb-waiter and see how much damage the fall had done him, the hunchbacked pawnbroker poked his head through the doorway.

His surprise at seeing Keen in that position may be imagined.

"Mine Gott, v'at for you coome down mit ter tumb-waiter?" he exclaimed. "You t'ink you play topoggan slide mit ter house, you—"

"That's all right. I missed the stairs," said the detective, ascertaining that no bones were broken.

"You missed nottings. You t'ink I no see you coome down so mit ter tumb-waiter. You must be crazy, you—"

But the detective had dashed across the narrow room, through the greasy curtains and out into the street before the pawnbroker could conclude his sentence. Keen was well shaken up by his fall down the shaft but not seriously injured. He knew that the noise he had made would speedily alarm the house, and that if captured he would have to answer some very embarrassing questions. It is not a usual thing for a man to journey up and down a strange house in the middle of a night by means of the dumb-waiter, and Keen knew it too well to allow himself to be seen.

So he turned around a corner, caught sight of the name of the street on a lamp-post and then hurried across to Broadway. He would be able to find "133" again in the morning, and he could do nothing by returning to that house again that night. On the other hand, it might arouse the suspicions of the occupants if he did so, and he did not care to have Manton see him just yet. The clerk was the only one of the party who knew the detective, having seen him at the Weldon House in Denver.

So Keen took a Broadway car up town to the hotel at which he was stopping, and went to his room, which was located directly next to that taken by Manton. He slept for several hours, and was awakened the next morning by the slamming of a door in the next room.

"Manton has got back," Keen said to himself, leaping out of bed. "And some one is with him too. It doesn't sound like Cal's voice, but it may be his. I'll dress and go out to the door. Perhaps I can hear what they say."

The rooms weren't conveniently connected by a door and transom as they ought to have been to make the thing realistic, so that the detective was forced to go out into the hall when he was dressed and apply his ear to the door of the room occupied by the clerk.

He was in momentary danger of discovery by some one passing, but he did not mind that so long as he could hear distinctly what was going on inside.

"Well, Mark, you are a free man once more," Keen heard Manton say. "And you ought to thank Carthay for what he has done."

"I am not free, by any means," the person addressed as Mark replied. "I am only out on bail. I shall be tried next month."

"But you don't mean to say that you are going to wait for trial?"

"I do, most certainly."

"You must be crazy. You know that Cal gave you the money understanding that you were going to jump bail!"

"That may be."

"And you really mean to say that you are going to face the evidence against you?"

"I do."

"You're a fool to do it."

"I don't think so. I don't know why Carthay advanced the money for my bail when he thought that I was going to jump it, but I sha'n't allow him to lose it."

"But he wants you to."

"What?"

"I mean he's anxious to have you go free. He don't think you can stand trial."

"He's very friendly, I know, but then I don't mean to get out and have him lose the bail money."

"Would you rather get ten or fifteen years in prison?"

"I don't think I shall."

"But you surely have no hopes of clearing yourself?"

"Not very strong ones, but then there's some chance of my doing so while I stay here. If I leave the city now every one will think me guilty."

Keen could hear Manton pace restlessly and down the room. His companion was sea on the bed.

"Well, of course you can do as you please, but if it was me I'd light out quick enough," the clerk said, earnestly. "Everything is against you, and—well, a prison isn't the pleasantest thing in the world, you know!"

"Of course it isn't, but then something may turn up between now and the day of trial to save me from that disagreeable place. I know in my own mind that I am not guilty, and understand just how the evidence all weighs against me."

"Have you told your father of it yet?"

"No."

"Do you intend to?"

"Not if I can help it. He thinks that I am visiting friends in the West. I could have obtained bail by applying to him, I suppose, but I did not wish to bring the disgrace of my arrest upon him. I was prepared to spend my time in the Tombs until the day of trial when Carthay unexpectedly came and bailed me out."

"And you have no defense to offer yet, have you?"

"Most decidedly I have. Do you suppose I shall submit quietly and be railroaded to prison?"

"Well, hardly; but I have been looking over the case, and, to tell the truth, I don't see a loophole of escape."

"Neither do I; but my lawyer—"

"Then you have already employed counsel?" asked Manton, and the detective thought he could detect a ring of alarm in his voice.

"Yes, of course. You seem to think that it is a foregone conclusion that I am to be convicted."

"I do think so, but I hope not. May—may I ask what plans you have for building up a defense?"

"I cannot mention any now. As I was just about to say, my lawyer has discovered some clues which seem to point to the real thief."

A low whistle escaped the clerk, and his walk up and down the room grew more rapid as his nervousness increased.

"I hope you will pardon my curiosity, Mark, but I feel something of an interest in this matter, and I may be able to assist you in some way. Do you mind telling me who you suspect, or—"

"I suspect nobody."

"But you said you had some clues to—to—"

"I said my lawyer had some slight ones. They may or may not amount to anything."

"But nothing definite?"

"No."

"Very well, then. I won't ask you any more questions, and I hope you'll excuse the interest I've displayed already."

"Of course I will—with pleasure."

"And now that we are to be room-mates, I shall be pleased to have you confide in me at any time the progress you are making. As I said before, I may be able to assist you."

"All right, I shall do so if you wish."

"And now I guess I'll go to sleep. I've been up all night—I suppose you haven't?"

"No."

"Then you might as well go down and get breakfast. I shall take a snooze and follow you presently."

"Very well. I have a little business downtown and I may attend to that first. I sha'n't go far from the hotel however."

"I wish you wouldn't. But you really won't take a disinterested man's advice and jump your bail?"

"I wouldn't think of it. Cal has treated me so kindly that it would be the basest kind of ingratitude for me to leave him in the lurch in this matter."

"But I assure you—"

"No use, Manton. I'm bound to stay here and fight this thing out."

"And get the worst of it too, I'll be bound."

"Perhaps—but good-by. I'll see you at noon."

"Yes—good-by."

The detective hastily retreated into his room as the person called Mark came out of the next one. He was a young man and a handsome one, although his face looked a trifle careworn and shadowed by recent trouble. He was well-dressed and had anything but the air of a man who had spent part of his life in a prison cell. He walked down the hall toward the stairs leading to the hotel office and as he did so Keen took a good look at him.

The detective also felt the need of eating breakfast, and so he followed the young man to the dining-room and took a seat near him at one of the long tables. At the conclusion of the meal Mark left the hotel and Keen, after debating the question of shadowing him, conclud-

ed not to do so and returned to his room to keep an eye on Manton. He was one of the principal figures in the drama at that point, while the detective concluded that Mark, if connected with it at all, was a subordinate.

The morning passed without incident worthy of recording. Keen kept a close watch upon the clerk's room, but that worthy slept soundly until noon. He was evidently worn out with the weary ride across the continent and his sleepless night had not tended to refresh him.

The detective took lunch at twelve o'clock, and while he was eating, Manton entered the room. Keen immediately bent down to escape detection, and when the clerk sat down, secured a place at a table behind him.

A moment later the man whom the detective had heard called Cal, and whom he imagined was the Clarence Carthay mentioned in Bonnie's letter, walked into the room and glanced about him. He saw Manton seated not far away, and hastened toward him.

"Hello, Dick; up already?" he asked.

"Yes; just got out of bed. Have you seen Mark?"

"No; is he here?"

"He's gone down-town. He was here this morning, and I showed him the room we are to occupy."

"How long does he intend to stay?"

"About a month, I guess—or at least until the day of trial."

"What?" exclaimed Cal, leaning back in his chair and regarding the man on the other side of the table with mingled surprise and alarm.

"It is a fact," went on the clerk, coolly. "He means to stay here and face trial. He hasn't even thought of jumping bail."

"The deuce!"

"No—Mark Hatfield."

"Then we're in a fix."

"How so?"

"We've got to get him out of the way."

"Well?"

"And if he won't go, why then—"

"Why, then, we'll see that he's made to go."

"In what way?"

"Can't we get him sent up for ten or fifteen years, for robbing the bank?"

Cal looked doubtful.

"I don't know. The evidence is strong against him; but, then, these blanded lawyers have a way of getting at the truth. It would be a nice thing to have him turn the tables on us, wouldn't it? Suppose we should get convicted of—"

"Don't mention such a thing."

"I won't; but then—say, did you do what you could to get Hatfield to skip?"

"Yes."

"Told him I'd be glad to lose the money?"

"Yes—everything."

"And he absolutely, unqualifiedly refused to go?"

"He did."

The two men regarded each other in silence for a moment. Then Cal spoke:

"Dick?"

"Well?"

"If we can't jail Mark for a good long term of years, we'll—"

He leaned over the table and whispered a few words in Manton's ears, in so low a tone of voice that the detective could not catch them.

"Yes," said the clerk, slowly. "That always works, but then it's dangerous."

CHAPTER VII.

A TRIP TO CONEY ISLAND.

"FOR the present," Cal went on, "keep your eye on Mark, and try to discover what his plans are. You may be able to get him to light out yet, if you show him how bad things look for him."

"I doubt it. He means business, and will stand trial even if he gets convicted. He thinks it would be to acknowledge his guilt if he jumped bail."

"I don't know but what he's right."

"Still, I'll see what I can do, and I won't let him get away from here. He's not very likely to, since his money's gone. How did you make out last night after I left you?"

"I went to bed right away."

"And the girls?"

"Bonnie went to her boarding-house as usual. She didn't seem to know anything about the other one. I kept her in the little room, and I shall not let her go until she tells me what she came there for."

"That's right."

"The Jew pawnbroker down in the basement

came up-stairs and said a man had just come down the dumb-waiter shaft. I told him he must be dreaming, but he insisted, and wouldn't get out until I threatened to fire him down the same way."

The two men talked on for nearly half an hour while eating lunch, making occasional references to the late adventure in "133," and at the conclusion of the meal, Cal said:

"I'll have to leave you now, Dick, and attend to this matter in relation to old man Hatfield. I can, perhaps, stave him off for a few days yet, and by that time we'll have gotten rid of Mark in some way."

"I'll do my best," replied Manton.

"All right, then. I'll see you to-night at my rooms."

"Yes, good-by."

"Good-by."

The two men separated, and Cal, closely followed by the detective, walked out of the hotel and took a down-town car. Keen sat next to him on the trip. He began to feel sure now that the young man called Mark was the victim of a conspiracy, and that both Cal and Manton were anxious to get him out of the way. For what reason, the detective could not imagine, but it was probable that by shadowing Cal on his visit to "stave off old man Hatfield," part of it, at least, would be disclosed.

And so Keen followed him. The man went down Broadway for some distance, and then took a cross street, and walked over toward the North River.

At one of the numerous piers there Cal purchased a ticket for Coney Island, and the detective promptly did likewise. He took passage on one of the steamboats plying between the great summer resort and the metropolis, and the two men journeyed down the bay together.

When they arrived at the Island, Cal proceeded at once toward one of the largest hotels there. He entered it, and walked up to the clerk's desk.

"Is Mr. Hatfield in?"

"Yes—Room 41."

"Will you please send up my name?"

The man wrote something on a piece of paper, and handed it to a bell-boy, who immediately sprung up the stairs.

"Is any one with Mr. Hatfield?" asked Cal.

"Not now."

"Has any one called to see him?"

"Yes."

"Who was it?"

"I don't know."

"A young man?"

"Yes."

"With a brown mustache?"

"Yes."

"How long did he stay?"

"An hour or more. His name is on the register there."

Cal bent over to see the name written in the book.

"Is he going to spend the night here?" he asked.

"I suppose he intended to when he registered."

"Has he called to see Mr. Hatfield before?"

"I don't remember seeing him."

"All right, thank you. I'll go up now; here's the boy."

The bell-boy came back, evidently with permission to have Cal go up-stairs, for he at once turned and entered the elevator. Then the detective approached the clerk's desk, and read the name of "Ralph Franklin" on the register. There were many others there, but this struck him as being the one which had attracted Cal's attention.

He walked up-stairs without showing signs of haste, and after inquiring the way to Room "41" of a chambermaid he met, proceeded to it at once. The door was closed, but the transom above it was open, and for the second time that day Keen played eavesdropper in a hotel.

The clerk told me that young Franklin had called this morning," he heard Cal say.

"Yes, he was here."

"Anything in connection with Mark?"

"Yes."

"Have—have you any hopes of being able to liberate him?"

"We hope to do so, of course, but there does not seem to be much chance of our being successful. I am almost beginning to fear that the poor boy did commit the crime."

"It looks that way, I must admit."

"I don't see who else could have done it. There were only you two working in the bank, and—"

"You surely don't suspect me?"

"Of course not."

"Then it must have been Mark. But even if he did do it, there is a chance of his getting free."

"How?"

"You gave me money yesterday with which to bail him out."

"Yes, and I'd give a hundred times as much to see him cleared."

"I bailed him."

"Well, what of that? He's only out until the day of trial."

"Unless he lengthens the time of his own accord."

"In what way?"

"He can skip—fly—jump bail, you understand."

"And leave the country?"

"Exactly."

"It would never do."

"Why not?"

"Everybody would think he was guilty then."

"Everybody thinks so now."

"But if he's given a fair trial, he may be able to explain away some of these things. He'd better stay here and take the risk anyway, even if he is convicted, rather than become an outlaw for life."

"Very well. It may be best, as you say, but I'll have to testify against him."

"I know that."

"And what I say alone is more than enough to send him through."

"That may all be, but I sha'n't lend my consent to Mark's jumping bail. It's too cowardly altogether. Besides, we have now a few slight clues to work on."

Cal looked a trifle uneasy, and he arose and walked toward the window in a restless, nervous way.

"If it was me I'd clear out for good. I came down here to tell you of it, and see what you thought of the scheme."

"I don't like it at all."

"Then we'll have to give it up, I suppose."

"What does Mark say about it?"

"He's the one who suggested the idea."

"Of jumping bail?"

"Yes."

"He ought to be ashamed of himself. I don't see what's got into the boy."

"Nor I," said Cal, with a hypocritical sigh.

"You can tell him for me that I advise him not to think of such a thing, will you?"

"Yes."

"And that I'll come and see him as soon as he'll let me."

"All right."

"I don't see why he's so anxious to have me keep away from him when he's in so much trouble."

"It's just a whim of his. I'll see you again in a day or two and let you know how the case stands."

"I wish you would. I'm sure we appreciate your trouble in assisting us in this way. If ever—"

"Don't mention it."

"Well, then, good-afternoon. I shall expect to hear from you soon."

"You will. And in the mean while look out for Franklin and his son. These bank presidents are slippery cusses, and they may try to get you in a trap of some kind. Keep your eye on 'em—good-by."

The door opened just a few seconds after the detective left it, and Cal, with a disappointed look on his face, came down-stairs. He took a short walk along the beach, and late in the afternoon boarded a steamer and went back to the city.

He was plainly dissatisfied with the result of his visit to the elder Hatfield. For some reason or other he was extremely anxious to get Mark out of the country, but just what connection the young man and the bank robbery had to do with the Weldon case, the detective could not see.

As soon as Cal landed in Gotham he retraced his steps to the up-town hotel, at which Manton was stopping, and found that worthy ensconced in the reading-room.

"Back already?" asked the clerk catching sight of Cal. "Did you see the old man?"

"Yes."

"With what success?"

"None at all. He absolutely refuses to sanction the idea of Mark's jumping bail."

A whistle of surprise escaped the clerk.

"You told him that the fellow was anxious to skip, didn't you?"

"Yes, but it was no go."

"He didn't catch on favorably, eh?"

"Not a bit of it."

Manton pulled away at his cigar reflectively

for a moment without speaking. Then suddenly his companion exclaimed:

"Dick, I have it."

"You have—what?"

"An idea regarding the matter."

"Then speak quickly, for I'm expecting Mark back every minute. I don't see where he stays so long."

"Why not tell the young man that his father wants him to light out?"

"He might not believe it."

"We could sign the old gentleman's name to a letter asking him to skip."

"That's so; but you see, Mark thinks his father knows nothing of all this. You didn't mean to tell him unless the old gent consented to his leaving the country."

"But we can say that he *did* consent."

"That might do."

"Mark would light out quick enough if once he thought his father wanted him to."

"Then we might try the scheme you propose. It's rather risky, for the whole game will be up if once he tumbles."

"I'll take good care that he don't tumble. Now the thing is to get a letter from Hatfield. Will you write it?"

"I'll try to. Have you got a sample of his writing?"

"Here's a letter which he wrote to Mark a day or two ago. Of course I forgot to deliver it."

"Naturally you did."

"And here are papers and envelopes from the hotel in which the old man is stopping at Coney Island. Write the letter on them."

"All right, I'll do my best."

"And meet me to-night down at my rooms. I'll see what I can do with my fair prisoner now. I don't want to keep her on my hands very long, but I'll have to, I'm afraid."

Cal went out and a moment later was on his way down-town.

CHAPTER VIII.

KEEN SECURES A FORTUNE.

AFTER Cal had left the hotel, the detective went up to his room and proceeded at once to change his appearance. His mustache was one of those remarkable ones which may be twisted into almost any position and relied upon to retain their shape. He removed the droop and combed it out into that ragged, wild-looking appearance, always associated with the cowboy and other residents of the Far West. Then he darkened his features, already by no means light, and donned a wig of long black hair.

He changed his "boiled" shirt for a flannel one, and his broadcloth suit for another made of corduroy. Then he was rigged up as a typical Western citizen, who was "doing the States" and went down into the corridor.

Manton sat in the reading-room yet, busily engaged in writing. Keen saw that he was in no hurry to leave, and so went to his dinner. When he returned, it was dark, and the clerk and the person called Mark stood together in the entrance.

As the detective walked up they separated, and Manton caught a down-town car.

So did Keen.

And greatly to the detective's surprise, he saw Mark climb aboard the next one bound in the same direction.

"Can he be following Manton also?" he asked himself.

When Canal street was reached, the clerk left the car and started across town. Keen followed his example, and had barely turned the corner, before he saw Mark come walking rapidly along behind him.

There was now no doubt as to his intentions.

Manton went directly to "133," and admitted himself through the front door. The detective crossed over to the other side of the street and waited for the young man. Mark walked boldly up the steps, and to Keen's surprise, disappeared inside. The door was unlocked.

The shadow knew that he could gain little by going inside through the front entrance, and his experience with the dumb-waiter showed him how easy it was to get into Cal's private apartments by its means. It was rather risky to interview the pawnbroker the second time, but he did not think of that as he hastened down the basement stairs. Behind the narrow counter sat an extremely fleshy woman of the same nationality as the hunchback. She looked up inquiringly as Keen entered.

"Where's the man who keep this place?" asked the detective.

"He vhas oudt. I 'tend der sthore 'til ten o'clock unt den he coomes on."

"Oh, that's it, eh?"

"Yaw."

"Well, I wanted to see him about—"

The detective spoke confidentially and pointed upward.

"Didt he say he vould take you oop ter play mit der bank?"

"Yes."

"All right, I vill show you the way oop."

"I can find my way, I guess," Keen said, pulling the curtains aside. "You needn't bother to leave the store."

"Rightt oop dem sthairs mit der corner. Don't go in der cellar."

"No, I've been—"

He was going to say that he had been there before but checked himself and walked inside. He went through the back room and into the cellar.

Once more the faithful dumb-waiter was in readiness and a moment later he was pulling himself up the shaft. He was getting to be somewhat of an adept in its management now, and he did not fear another fall.

Up and up he went until he reached the opening in the shaft at the closet adjoining Cal's rooms. Here he held the rope and listened. It was the clerk speaking.

"There's the letter. I've done my best to imitate the old man's handwriting, and you can see for yourself how well I've succeeded."

"That's pretty fair. Have you seen Mark since I left you?"

"Yes, but I didn't tell him anything. He has spent most of the day at his lawyer's office."

"That's bad. The quicker we can get rid of him now the better."

"So I think."

"Then you take the letter."

"Why don't you deliver it?"

"Well, I will if you don't care to risk it."

"I'm not afraid; but you've seen the old gent and I hav'n't."

"Very well, I'll call up to the hotel to-morrow morning and hand it to him. I'll have to concoct some story in the mean time to go with it."

"You can do that easily enough. Now let's go over and see the girl."

"I'm with you. She's the cause of this present difficulty, but a mighty pretty one, eh, Dick?"

"She is, indeed."

Keen heard the door open and close, and then the men walked down stairs. He waited until he thought they had reached the street and then climbed out of the dumb-waiter.

The large room, as he entered it, was lit up, and the door leading to the smaller rooms stood open. He passed through it, and as he did so, made a discovery.

The girl Aimie was not there.

Either Cal had taken her to another and more secure place, or she had escaped while he was absent. The detective found that all four of the rooms were empty, and then returned to the large one. Nothing in it had been changed since his visit of the previous night.

The center-table, the lounge, the chairs—all were the same, while the small stove in front of the chimney looked as desolate as ever.

Just as he mentioned the chimney in his thoughts, he was forcibly reminded of the conversation between the two men which he had overheard when there before. One of them had spoken of a sachel hid in the chimney!

Keen stooped down behind the stove, inserted his head in the chimney's wide opening, and glanced upward. The sachel sat on a projecting brick only a few inches above him.

It was the work of a moment to take it down. He carried it to the center-table, opened it and inspected its contents. There was a neatly bound package of bank-notes marked \$50,000, and one more substantial-looking bundle of papers. A hasty examination of these disclosed the fact that they were Government bonds of old dates.

There was a fortune, and a large one at that, in the small black sachel!

For a moment the detective was undecided. Then he shoved the package of greenbacks in one side-pocket of his coat, and the bonds in the other. He took from the chimney a brick and placed that in the sachel, closed it up and returned it to its former hiding-place.

A few minutes later he heard a noise in the hall and hastily retreated to the closet. The door of the room opened and Manton rushed in. He went directly to the chimney, reached up, secured the sachel, and went flying out into the hall and down-stairs as if all the police force of New York was after him. The detective had secured the fortune just in time.

Keen waited for nearly an hour before there were any further developments. Then he heard some one enter the large room from the hall and

lock the door. The detective peeked out of his hiding-place and saw a young man approach the chimney with suspicious stealth. He seemed satisfied that he was not observed, for, after taking a careful survey of the room, he reached his hand up toward where the sachel had been.

He was in that position when the door was hastily unlocked, and Cal came in. For half a second there was silence, then—

"What in blazes are you doing here?" he roared.

There came two suspicious clicks, and Keen knew that each had drawn a revolver.

"I came here to get the money you stole," the young man replied, coolly. "And I intend to get it."

"You do, eh?"

"Or find out why not."

"Well, you just come away from that chimney and march down-stairs, or I'll put you where you won't find out anything very soon."

"I expected that, and if you raise that revolver you have there, I'll fire."

"Fire and be—"

Crack!

A pistol-shot rung out sharp and clear, but the detective could not see who it was that fired.

"I missed you that time, but if you raise your revolver again I'll take more careful aim," the young man by the chimney said. "I intend to get the money you stole if I have to carry it away over your dead body."

"How do you know anything about this business, anyway?"

"Never mind about that. Are you willing?"

"I'm not willing to do anything. These are my rooms, and you have no right in them."

"But I choose to take the right. Once more, are you going to let me have that money?"

"I don't know what money you are talking about."

"Then I'll tell you. Go over to the chimney and reach up after the sachel which you put there a few days ago."

"I don't know anything about a sachel."

"You don't, eh?"

"No."

"Then if I find one there you won't object to my taking it away?"

"I sha'n't let you take anything from this room as long as I'm here."

The two men stood and eyed each other in silence for a moment, and then the young man said:

"Now see here, Cal, I'm bound to have this thing settled somehow, and if I don't get the money now I'm sure to at some other time. You'd better let me have it peaceably and not make it necessary to call in the police. I—"

While the other was speaking Cal was preparing to end the whole matter at once. He held in his right hand a revolver which was useless as long as the young man had the drop on him, but which he intended to use effectually without pulling the trigger.

Suddenly his arm shot straight out from the shoulder, hurling the revolver with all his strength straight into the face of the man by the chimney. There was a scream of pain and then he fell as if struck by a cannon ball, while his assailant sprung over his prostrate body and thrust his arm up the chimney; a moment later and Cal was frantically tearing down bricks and mortar from the flue, while he turned the air about him blue with oaths.

He had just discovered the loss of the sachel.

CHAPTER IX.

A TRAGEDY IN "133."

It took Cal nearly five minutes to fully comprehend the fact of the sachel's disappearance. He searched the chimney flue up as far as he could reach, and then thoroughly examined the floor at its base.

But not a vestige of the fortune could he find.

When he saw that it was indeed gone, he ceased to swear, and threw himself into a chair, staring blankly from the prostrate man on the floor to the place where he had hidden the sachel.

"Gone," he muttered half aloud.

"Who could have—"

A groan from his fallen antagonist interrupted him, but he paid no attention to the young man's sufferings. He drew out his revolver and carefully examined it by the light from the gas-jet. The chambers were all full and he thrust it back into his hip pocket.

Then he arose, a deep, black scowl upon his face and started toward the door. Suddenly changing his mind he turned and threw open the door of the closet in which the detective was concealed.

Whiz!

If he had been astonished at the mysterious and unexpected loss of the sachel, it is not exaggeration to say that his surprise was increased ten-fold when he opened that closet door. He caught a quick glimpse of a man with long black hair and mustache, and then a powerful arm shot out from the darkness of the interior; a bunch of hardened knuckles struck him square between the eyes, and Cal was hurled backward, half way across the room.

Then the detective stepped quickly out, and when the fallen man sat up on the floor, he stared straight down the polished barrel of a six-shooter.

"Don't move," commanded Keen.

Cal glared at him, astonishment and rage for the moment rendering him speechless. Then—

"Who're you?" he roared.

"I seem to be boss here just now," the detective said coolly. "And— Now keep still! If you go for your revolver you'll regret it."

"But I—"

"Shut up."

"I say you—"

"Will you keep still?"

Keen's fingers trembled upon the trigger and Cal subsided.

Then the detective produced a pair of handcuffs, at the sight of which the man's right hand again moved back toward his hip pocket.

"Careful now," said Keen warningly.

"But I won't—"

"You won't do anything at all."

The detective advanced toward Cal and just when that worthy was debating whether or not to risk a grab for his revolver, Keen sprang upon him. There was a short, sharp struggle, a sulphurous flow of oaths from the under man, and then Cal lay upon the floor with steel bracelets clamping his wrists.

"Now my man," said the shadow, "if you have anything to say, go ahead."

"I only want to say that I'll make you suffer for this blanked outrage, you scoundrel! What in—"

"That will do. Now I shall take the liberty of locking you up—"

"You—" roared Cal, but Keen stopped him.

"I shall lock you up in this room for the present to keep you out of mischief. I will return before long with a police officer."

The detective carried Cal across the room, and laid him on the lounge. Then he turned his attention to the wounded man on the floor, and soon had him resuscitated.

The revolver had struck him on the forehead, and while not producing a dangerous wound, had knocked him senseless. A hasty bath of cold water, and the administration of a little brandy, quickly brought the young man back to life.

"Who hit me?" was his first question, when he opened his eyes. "Am I shot?"

"No," replied Keen. "You're all right. Cal struck you with his revolver; that's all. How do you feel?"

"Quite well, except for my head. Did you get the sachel?"

"No. I happened along just in time to save Cal's escaping. Who are you?"

"Ralph Franklin."

"And what do you know about these men?"

"I know that Carthay stole money from a bank, and—"

"You're a liar," roared the man on the lounge.

"If you say I stole—"

"Keep still, please," said Keen, softly. "We don't need your suggestions at all."

Cal sunk back again with a curse upon his lips.

"I know that he took nearly fifty thousand dollars from a bank up-town in which he was employed. Another man is now in jail for the crime."

"But how did you find all this out—and when?"

"This afternoon. And I came here to-night to get the money, which I had been told was hidden up the chimney."

"Who told—" began Cal, but a warning shake of the revolver quieted him.

"I came to get it, as I said, and just as I was about to look in the chimney this man entered. You know the rest."

"Yes," replied the detective. "And if you feel able to do so, I wish you'd stay here and watch our prisoner, while I go out and get a warrant for this fellow's arrest, and an officer to serve it."

"I will," replied Ralph.

"Just keep an eye on him, and look out that he don't surprise you with some of his tricks. I shan't be gone long."

"All right."

Ralph took a seat in a chair near the lounge, and rested the revolver across his knee as the detective went out.

Keen hurried down-stairs and crossed over to Mulberry street, and thence up to Police Headquarters, not many blocks away. He entered the handsome structure, and walked straight through the winding halls and intricate passageways, to the chief inspector's room.

"Is Byrnes in?" he asked of the sergeant at the door.

"Yes."

"Will you please ask him if Kid Keen can see him at once?"

"Yes."

The sergeant did not leave his post, but whistled through a speaking-tube at his right hand. A moment later the call was answered.

"Hello, sergeant."

"Hello, is this you, inspector?"

"Yes."

"Man by the name of Kid Keen wants to see you at once."

"Describe him."

Keen had removed as much of his disguise as possible.

"Short, dark-complexioned, with long, dark mustache. Looks like Buffalo Bill, and—"

"Show him in."

The detective smiled at the precautions taken to prevent mistakes, as he was conducted into the chief inspector's august presence.

"Hello, Keen, you're the greatest man I ever saw for turning up at unexpected moments," Byrnes said, rising and extending his hand. "I didn't even know you were in the city."

"I came in from Denver yesterday on a little case, but which has grown considerable since. Has there been a bank-robbery in the city, lately, chief?"

"Yes, several."

"One in which the president of the bank was named Franklin?"

"Yes."

"How long ago?"

"That was the Occidental Bank," Byrnes said, referring to a blank-book. "Robbed of fifty thousand dollars two weeks ago. Mark Hatfield, clerk, was arrested on suspicion. Clarence Carthay, one of the other clerks, left for Denver, but no suspicion was attached to him. Young Hatfield probably did the business, as one or two of the stolen bonds were found in his possession, and on the evidence furnished by Carthay he was indicted by the Grand Jury for grand larceny. He is to be tried next month."

"Is that all you know about it?"

"That's all I have entered in the book as an abstract of the case. I can call in the men who were working on it and who made the arrests, if you choose."

"No, you needn't bother to do that. I think I have the real robber handcuffed down here in a house on Baxter street."

"You have?"

"Yes."

"But how is it that you are on the case?"

"Oh, I stumbled upon it by accident while working up another one," said Keen, pulling out from his pockets the package of bonds. "Here's the fifty thousand dollars that was stolen."

"What?"

"There they are."

"Are you sure those are the ones?"

"I'm pretty certain of it."

The inspector made a hasty examination of the papers.

"They are the very thing. How, where and when did you get them?"

"I haven't got time now to tell the whole story, but I will later. Can you let me have a warrant now?"

"Certainly," said the chief inspector, rising from his desk. "Come with me."

The two walked down-stairs together.

"Keen, you are a wonder and no mistake," said Byrnes. "If it hadn't been for you, young Hatfield would have spent some years up the river, that's certain."

"As it is, the other clerk is the man who'll do that," said Keen.

"Then it's Carthay you've caught, is it?"

"He's the man."

"Well, bring him along. I always like to see a person get his deserts. Do you want me to keep the papers?"

"Yes."

"All right. Here is your warrant."

Keen took it and was soon hastening back to the house in Baxter street, without waiting for assistance. He thought there would be no trou-

ble about serving the warrant, since the prisoner was securely handcuffed.

But there was!

The detective soon reached "133" and climbed up the steps leading to the front entrance. He found that since he had left the house the door had been locked. He went down into the basement and passed through the pawnbroker's shop, paying no attention to the hunchback's ejaculations of surprise.

He walked into the rear room and ran rapidly up the stairs to the floor on which Cal's rooms were located. With some little difficulty he found the door which he thought to be the right one, and placed his hand upon the knob.

It also was locked.

"Ralph," he called out, shaking the door.

There was no response.

"Ralph," somewhat louder this time.

He waited fully a minute, and, getting no answer, threw his whole weight against the door.

Crash!

It flew from its hinges and along with it the detective fell into the room with more force than grace. Keen scrambled quickly to his feet and found himself in pitch darkness. The gas which he left lighted had been extinguished. He struck a match and relit it, wondering what could have happened in his absence.

One look about the room elicited a startling and unpleasant fact.

He was not in the apartment in which he had left Cal a prisoner a short time before. The room was much the same in size, but more comfortably furnished, and from one side a door led into a smaller apartment facing the street. He was about to retreat when this door was opened and a pale face presented itself.

It was Aimie—the girl who had rescued him from his uncomfortable position the night before. And when Keen caught sight of her, he was by no means sorry that he had broken down the wrong door.

The girl looked at him with frightened eyes.

"I have come here after you," Keen said, kindly. "Cal is in his room, handcuffed, and the money has been recovered."

"And you will let me go home now?"

"Yes."

"Thank Heaven. I have been here ever since morning without a thing to eat or drink except the wretched food that old woman brought me."

"Well, you needn't suffer any more."

"And Bonnie?" the girl asked, "where is she?"

"Safe, I hope, although I am not sure."

"She isn't in the building?"

"I think not."

"Oh, I'm so glad. I was afraid she would get frightened because I didn't come back, and start out to look for me. Are Cal and Manton both captured now?"

"Manton has escaped."

"But the stolen money—has all been recovered?"

"Yes."

"Bonnie will be glad to hear of it. That worried her more than anything else."

Keen thought that Bonnie must be a peculiar variety of thief, if that was the case.

"Are you ready now?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then come on."

He led the way to the front door and shoved back the night-latch.

"Come to Police Headquarters to-morrow morning, will you?" the detective asked at parting. "We shall need you for a witness."

"Yes, I shall be glad to do anything to bring those scoundrels to justice. And if I can find Bonnie—"

"Bring her along too."

The girl walked away in the darkness, and Keen closed the door and returned once more to the upper floor in his search for his prisoner. Starting up the front way, he speedily found it.

The door was open, and the light from within streamed out into the darkened hall. But as he crossed the threshold he paused, and an exclamation of surprise escaped him.

The room in which he had left Cal and Ralph was empty.

CHAPTER X.

A FALSE SCENT.

WE must now leave Keen for a short time, and follow the adventures of young Mark Hatfield, who had been indicted by the grand jury for robbing the Occidental Bank. He was a young man of twenty-five, or thereabouts, who, with Clarence Carthay, had been employed as clerk in that institution. Until within two weeks of our story's opening, he had received

the full confidence of his employers. In fact, he was allowed to perform all of the most responsible duties, and was closely associated in his work with Francis Franklin, the president of the bank.

Mark's father was a wealthy hotel-owner at Coney Island, but he desired to have his son grow up into a more respectable vocation. For that reason he had consented to his accepting a position in the Occidental Bank. The salary of the clerkship was not the inducement, and the president knew it.

In his capacity as private secretary to Mr. Franklin, Mark frequently met the latter's daughter, Bonnie, and before long something more than friendship grew up between the two young people. Her father looked upon a possible match between them with decided disfavor, and finally, when their engagement was announced, swore that he would never allow the marriage to take place. He regarded Mark simply in the light of a hired servant, and by no means Bonnie's social equal.

But social inequality was never for a moment considered by the two persons most directly interested in the matter. Bonnie was a high-spirited maiden, and when her father set his foot down on matrimony as she desired it, the girl consented to an elopement.

And so she went to Denver suddenly one day, without even her lover's knowledge of the fact. But when she arrived there, she mailed Mark a letter, telling him what she had done, and asking him to come straight out to her.

But Mark didn't do anything of the sort, for the letter, when it reached New York, fell into the hands of Clarence Carthay. Cal had once proposed to Bonnie, and his rejection had not dampened the ardor of his devotion. So, when he saw how nicely things were situated for him, he tore up Bonnie's letter to Mark, appropriated fifty thousand dollars of the bank's money, and hid himself away to Denver.

Before leaving, he was thoughtful enough to conceal two of the stolen bonds in Mark's room, at an up-town hotel. He also induced the bank janitor, by the application of two more, to swear that he had seen young Hatfield take the papers from the safe. Cal even went so far as to swear to that fact himself.

And Mark, who had lost his intended bride, his position in the bank, his reputation and his ambition, was arrested and indicted by the always-to-be-relied-on grand jury of the county of New York. He spent a couple of weeks languishing in the Tombs, and was then, much to his surprise, bailed out by Carthay, who proffered sudden and unexpected friendliness toward the unfortunate young man. Mark had not told his father of his imprisonment, but some one else, as we have seen, was kind enough to perform that service for him.

During his confinement Hatfield had heard nothing from his intended bride, and did not know whether her father was the cause of her absence, or if she had stayed away of her own accord. He thought probably that it was the former, for the girl was not one to go back on a friend in trouble.

When Cal came with money for his bail, Mark had at first declined to accept it; but then he saw what much better opportunity he would have of clearing himself out of prison, and so decided to accept Carthay's proffered kindness. This kindness, as the reader already knows, was not as disinterested as it might have been, nor did the money to release Mark come from himself. It was furnished by the young man's father.

And so Mark left the Tombs and started out to win back his good name. He first engaged a good lawyer to whom he expressed his hopes and fears and told his story from beginning to end. The result was that the lawyer began to suspect Carthay. He advised Hatfield to watch Cal constantly, but not so as to excite his suspicions, and see if anything occurred that would tend to connect him with the robbery. And this Mark did, paying no heed to their earnest efforts to get him to jump his bail. On the night of Cal's return from Coney Island, Mark followed Manton down from the hotel to "133" as we have seen. His suspicions were aroused and he resolved to investigate the case thoroughly, for he felt convinced at last that he was on the right track. He had never seen Manton until Cal introduced the clerk to him shortly after his release.

He had no trouble in entering "133" after the door had closed upon the man whom he was following. But once inside, he was lost. He did not know whether Manton had gone up or downstairs or entered a room on that floor. For some minutes he stood in the lower hall debating the

question, and then he heard some one coming down the stairs. He drew back in the darkness, and saw by the light coming through the door when they opened it, that the men were none other than Cal and Manton.

They went down the steps into the street, and as soon as it was safe to follow them, Mark did so. The two were in earnest conversation but the young man did not dare to go close enough to hear what they were talking about.

Through a number of cross streets they went, and finally went up the steps of a house not far from "133." Cal unlocked the door and they disappeared within. In another instant Mark was on the stoop, but one trial showed him that he could not hope to gain admittance through the front entrance. At the side of the house an alley-way, narrow and dark, ran around to the rear, and without a moment's hesitation he pulled open the door and ran through it. The back of the house contained but one entrance and this also was locked. He did not care to alarm the inmates by making a noise, so he looked about him for some more convenient way of getting inside. All the windows on the first floor were closed and barred and those above were beyond his reach. Then he turned his attention toward the cellar and was almost instantly successful in devising a means of gaining admittance.

A small window cut through the brick foundation of the house was closed only by a wire screen. He dropped on his knees before it and brought his knife into active service. It did not take him long to remove the screen, and having done so, he lay face downward on the ground, and thrust his legs through the opening. It was a tight squeeze but a successful one, for he went through it and struck the hard floor on the inside all in a heap. He arose and tried to see where he was but the darkness was too intense, and he could only grope about for the door. He did not find one but he was finally successful in forcibly striking something even better—a pair of stairs leading upward.

He climbed silently but rapidly to the top, opened the door which he found there, and stepped out into the hall, dimly lit by the rays of an electric lamp, coming in through the glass transom of the front door.

He looked about him. On his right hand an open door led into a nicely furnished room, evidently the parlor of the house. On the left was situated a pair of stairs, and he at once ran noiselessly up these to the hall above.

Then for the first time he heard voices. They issued from a room at the end of the hall, facing the street. He stole forward, and, in the darkness, stumbled over a man engaged in looking through the key-hole in the door of the room in which the men were talking. He made quite a loud noise, and the two grappled.

"Ralph!"
"Mark!"
The touch seemed to cause a mutual recognition.

"What on earth are you doing here?" whispered Hatfield.

"I'll tell you later. I suppose you followed the men in?"

"I did."
"Are you armed?"
"Yes."

"Get ready—here they come. They must have heard us."

Two sharp clicks resounded through the quiet hall as the young men pulled back the hammers of their revolvers. Then the door of the room opened, letting a flood of light into the hall.

Ralph and Mark dashed forward, but the two men, not knowing who or what was coming at them out of the darkness, made a break for escape and tumbled headlong down stairs.

"Stay here and look out for the girls," Ralph shouted as he sprang after them, and Mark, not knowing what he meant by "the girls," stood at the head of the stairway. He heard Cal tear open the front door and all three of the men dashed out into the street.

It was very probable that Cal and Manton would have shown fight had they known who their assailants were. But to be attacked so suddenly, and in the dark at that, is enough to unnerve the bravest of men, and neither Carthay nor the clerk were among that class.

When they had disappeared outside, Mark, who was an unwilling deserter, turned with his revolver in his hand to see who Ralph had meant by "the girls." He glanced into the brilliantly illuminated room and staggered back with a cry of surprise.

Bonnie Franklin with her pale face and

frightened eyes confronting him, stood in the doorway.

"Mark!"
"Bonnie, is it really you?"
A most substantial embrace convinced him that his surmise was correct.

"But how in God's name did you get here?" he asked, holding her off at arm's length and looking steadily into her brown eyes. "And what have you got to do with these scoundrels, anyway?"

"I can't tell you now," replied the poor girl, sinking into a chair. "I've been through so much, that I can scarcely realize that I am the same person who left the city two short weeks ago."

Mark gently stroked her soft, curly hair as he answered:

"But you surely haven't done anything wrong, Bonnie, on my account?"

She shook her head.

"I've tried not to, Mark. But why did you come here?"

"I followed Cal and Manton from a house in Baxter street."

"To-night?"

"Yes."

"But I thought you were in—in prison."

"I was until to-day, when I was released on bail."

"Then you know that Cal is the real thief?"

"I suspect it."

"But don't you know where the stolen bonds are?"

"No."

"But Ralph does. I told him this morning. Go now, Mark, and help him. I will stay here."

"But this is no place—"

"I can endure it a while longer. Go and see what you can do for Ralph. He's sure to get in trouble with those men if he tries to get the sachel."

"Very well, I'm off. But is any one here with you? Ralph said something about girls being here, but I did not know what he meant at first."

"He thinks Aimie Warder—"

"Is she here, too?"

"She was; but I don't know where she is now."

"Do be careful, Mark."

"I will; good-by. I sha'n't be gone longer than is necessary."

"Good-by."

The young man dashed down the stairs and out into the street. He had been born and brought up in Gotham, and there was no difficulty in finding his way back to "133." He hurried along until he reached Baxter street, and turned into it just in time to see Manton come running out of the house toward which Mark was going. He carried in his hand a small sachel, and at sight of it the young man remembered Bonnie's words.

The stolen bonds must be in the sachel which the clerk was carrying off. The very thought sent Mark flying after him, resolving as he hurried along, to get back the papers at any cost. Manton crossed Canal street to the North River, and walked into one of the ferry-houses, with Hatfield close upon his heels.

CHAPTER XI.

KID KEEN IN TROUBLE.

"YOU break town der doors mit der house; you slide mit der tumb-vaiter down, you—"

The detective, after discovering that his prisoner had escaped, stood for some minutes, baffled and angry. He could not imagine how Cal had been able to get away when he had been both handcuffed and guarded by the watchful Ralph. While he was puzzling his brain over the knotty question, the cracked voice of the hunchbacked pawnbroker broke the silence.

"Shut up!" retorted Keen, sharply.

"I vhas gif you to understan' dolt I own house, und I allow no such broceedings s-haf here. V'y you shlide down mit tumb-vaiter? V'y you break my doors der hind? V'y you coome here mit false whiskers und—"

The detective whirled around.

"See here, my friend, I'll pay you f r all damage I've done if you'll close that trap door for a few minutes."

"Vhas you crazy or dhunk?"

"Both," said the detective, shortly, and anxious to terminate the interview. "How much is the door worth?"

"Vell, dolt door when it vhas new, cost—"

"Never mind what it cost," growled Keen.

"How much will it be worth to put it on its hinges again? Speak quick!"

"Two dollar und a halluf."

"There's a V. You can take the change in

paying for the damage I did your dumb-waiter."

"You're a shentleman, sir, uf you vhas dhrunk und crazy," the hunchback said, stowing the bill away in his pocket.

The detective did not stop to thank him for his sudden and favorable change of opinion, but asked:

"Did you see a man or two men go out of here at any time within the past hour?"

"Dere vhas men goes pack und forth all der time, almost. Dey play mit der bank up-stairs."

"But the man I mean was short and dark—"

"Lodts uf men like dodt go oop-sthairs to gample, don't id?"

Keen was about to give up a further cross-examination of the pawnbroker, when a brilliant idea struck him.

"You know the man who hired this room when you see him, don't you?" he asked.

"Yaw."

"Well, he's the one I mean. Have you seen him lately?"

"Yaw."

"When?"

"A leedle vwhile ago."

"Where—tell me all about it."

"Vell, I vhas standing mit de stoop down there, unt I heard a great racket oop in dis room. I waited soome time after you went out, unt den dodt man vvhich hired this room coome down—"

The hunchback paused to give vent to a burst of merriment.

"Go on," said Keen, impatiently.

"He vhas handcuffed."

"Yes."

"Unt a young man with a prown mustache vhas leadin' him along mit a chain."

"His hands were tied and a young man was leading him along. Is that what you mean?" asked Keen.

"Yaw."

The detective stopped long enough to ask the hunchback whether or not he knew the direction they had taken.

"Dey vent ofer toward Mulberry sthreet."

Then Keen went quickly down-stairs and started up toward the Police Headquarters, thinking it probable that Ralph had taken his prisoner there.

He was walking along the almost deserted streets, when, while passing a doorway in front of a darkened house, he saw a man stagger out. Keen thought he was drunk, and made a move toward the road in order to elude him, but the fellow gave a sudden lurch and almost fell into the detective's arms.

"Beg pard'n," he said, staggering back.

"Didn't mean no harm."

"That's all right," Keen said, trying to pass on.

But the man fell up against him the second time, and the detective sent him spinning out into the street. He picked himself up and ran down the steps into a dimly-lit basement near by, over the door of which hung a faded "wines and liquors" sign. The man's movements aroused Keen's suspicions, and, a thought striking him, he thrust his hand into the side-pocket of his coat, where he had left the fifty-thousand-dollar package.

It was gone.

The drunken man had played the old dodge in robbing him.

For a moment only the detective hesitated, and then turned and ran down after the pick-pocket. In doing so he fairly took his life in his hands, for he had entered one of the worst dives in New York City.

At the foot of the steps stood a narrow door, and this Keen threw open. Then he passed through it into a small, low-ceilinged room, on one side of which extended a plain wooden bar. Behind it a short man, with a very red face and a white apron, was dispensing drinks to a crowd of rough and tough looking persons in front. In the rear of the room, opposite the entrance, was a door leading to other apartments, and through this, as Keen entered, disappeared the thief.

The detective was going straight toward this door, when the bartender halted him.

"See here, my hearty, where be you goin'?"

"I'm going in here," said Keen, coolly, placing his hand on the door-knob. "After the fellow who just came in."

"No you ain't, neither," said the red-faced man. "Them's private rooms back thar."

"I don't care if they are," replied the shadow, exerting all his strength to force open the door, which was locked.

The bartender laid down the glasses he held in

his hand and removed his white apron, while his customers exchanged smiles.

"Be you a-comin' away from that door?" he inquired, making a show of rolling up his sleeves.

Keen did not answer, but with a final mighty wrench burst the lock of the door.

"Whoop!"

The bartender gave a Comanche yell when he saw the destruction of his property, and rushed around from behind the bar.

"Lemme at him!" he roared, dancing around, while the detective raised his foot and sent the door flying from its hinges.

The rough-looking men showed no disposition to keep down the bartender's rising wrath. In fact, they encouraged it, and just as Keen crossed the threshold into the rear room, the red-faced man hit him a resounding whack on the side of the head. Had the detective paid less attention to the whereabouts of the man who had robbed him, and more to the bartender, the blow would never have been struck. As it was, the short man always regretted it, for he was suddenly seized by the nape of the neck, whirled about like a top, and then sent flying through the air. He landed in a demoralized heap in one corner, along with an eloquent and emphatic burst of Mulberry street oaths.

And then the crowd of tough-looking men who had been drinking took up the fight. They had expected the bartender to eat Keen all up, but his downfall devolved the responsibility of that job upon them.

They didn't hesitate about commencing it.

One fellow with a savage black mustache, a half-smoked cigar stuck into one corner of his mouth, and his derby hat set well down over his eyes, led the assault. He was seconded by a man similar to him in general make-up, but individualized by a striped shirt and a large glass scarf-pin.

"Whoop!" yelled he of the black mustache.

"Whoop!" echoed the fellow with the striped shirt-front.

"Whoop!" roared in chorus the rest of the motley throng.

And then they hurled themselves upon the detective.

Keen had planted his back up against the wall, and with his fists clinched and his revolvers within easy reach, he did not greatly fear the result of the encounter.

The leader struck a wild blow at him, and the next instant he went tumbling back into the crowd of his followers. His lieutenant fanned the air several times with his huge fists, and then sat down. The rest of the mob closed in around him, and yelling and cursing, sought to get him within their grasp.

But the detective, bending slightly forward, punched and pounded with his hard knuckles, until the men before him were giving way, and then he slipped back into the rear room to see if he could find a trace of the thief. The men followed him, but he turned upon them like a tiger and sent his fists flying out with all the strength of his strong arms. They flew back to join their sore-headed companions, while Keen ran through the rear room, which was fitted up with card and billiard tables, to a stairway on one side. This was the only visible outlet, and he thought the man who had robbed him must have used it. He ran up and found that it terminated in a long, dark passageway.

Drawing his revolver and holding it ready for instant use, he walked into the narrow hall. On and on it led, now in one direction, and then in another, first up and then down, until it terminated finally with a closed door—where, the detective could not tell. He quickly opened this and felt the cool night air. He was standing at the entrance, evidently, to a back yard to a house on some other street. As he stepped down on the stone walk, his foot struck something very soft, and he bent over to see what it was.

There, stretched out on the pavement, lay the body of the man who had robbed him of the package of bank-notes. A deep wound could be dimly seen, by the light of the moon and stars, on the side of his head. Just a little distance away lay a slung-shot, bloody and dented.

The man's theft had cost him his life. Some of his companions, seeing what he held, had, in their turn, robbed and murdered him.

But Keen did not stop long over the body. He saw in front of him a building gayly illuminated, with an entrance in the rear of the court-yard. He crossed over and went inside. Through a narrow hall, he passed into a large room, ornamented with fancy lights and flow-

ers. A semi-circular bar extended from one corner. Around the room were arranged tables, and at these men and women were sitting, eating and drinking. In the center of the floor, on a raised platform, a band was grinding out the music of a once popular waltz, while around it circled half a hundred dancers. Further description is unnecessary to any one who is acquainted with the wickedness of those hidden dance-houses in the lower part of Gotham. To the reader who isn't, it is even more unnecessary.

The detective stood for a moment in the doorway until his eyes became accustomed to the light. Then he looked about the room.

At a table near him sat four men, and as Keen's eyes rested upon them, he saw that one of them carried in his hand the package of bank-notes.

"That was a nice pull, eh, Buck?" one of them said.

"It's a good one if the bills are good ones. I'm afraid they're counterfeit."

"Untie them and see."

The package was laid upon the table and one of the men produced a knife. The three others arose to keep off a possible assault, should any one learn of the money they had stolen.

But before the man with the knife could sever the cord which bound up the package, a powerful form leaped among them, a hand wrested it from his grasp, and Kid Keen stood by the overturned table with a revolver staring the four men in the face.

CHAPTER XII.

THE STRUGGLE FOR A BRICK.

MANTON purchased a ticket and passed through to the ferry-boat. Mark did likewise. If anything was needed to convince him that the stolen bonds were in the sachel, it was quickly done away with by the careful and considerate way with which the clerk carried it. It was easy to see that he considered the sachel a thing of great value.

Mark did not know what ferry he was on, nor did he care. He was resolved to get the bonds if he had to chase the clerk around the world to do so.

Presently the boat started.

Manton leaned against the rail on the forward deck, and watched the lights of the three visible cities sparkle through the midnight gloom. He had run all the way from "133," as if expecting to be pursued, and now wiped the perspiration from his face and looked decidedly relieved. As soon as he was somewhat rested, he walked to one of the deck-hands and inquired:

"Where is this boat going?"

The man looked at him in astonishment.

"Hav' yez cum aboard without knowin' where yez wer' goin'?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, that's mighty funny."

The clerk looked at him impatiently.

"But tell me, please, where this boat runs to."

The man glanced at him curiously, and instead of replying, walked to a group of men, well dressed, and all wearing high black silk hats. They spoke together for a moment in surprise, and then one of them approached Manton.

"See here, my man," he said, "may I ask why you came aboard?"

"Because," answered the clerk, angrily, "I always thought that a ferry-boat was a public place."

"This one isn't."

"Why not?"

"It has been hired from the company by a number of gentlemen to take a moonlight sail up the river."

"Then how is it that the ticket-seller let me through his gate at the usual price?" demanded Manton, and Mark stepped forward to hear the answer.

"He is selling tickets for the regular ferry trips. The other boat lay further down the dock."

"And I got on the wrong one?"

"Correct."

Manton looked angry and annoyed. He was extremely anxious to put as much distance as possible between himself and New York City, and here he had failed in his first move.

"How far up do you go?" he asked.

"Only a few miles."

"And you come right back?"

The man shook his head.

"No."

"Then may I ask what you are going to do?"

The man in the high black hat looked the clerk over carefully before replying.

"You won't give the thing away, will you?"

"What thing?"

"I mean, can you be trusted with a secret?"

"Sometimes."

"Well, then, we are on a little secret expedition over to Weehawken."

Manton didn't exactly know whether or not Weehawken was within a hundred miles of New York City. But he simply answered:

"Yes."

"We're going over to see a little pugilistic business—you understand?"

"A prize-fight?"

"Yes."

"I see."

"We'll take you along if you'll keep quiet and not give the racket away."

"I won't."

"Nor let any of the boys know that you're a stranger?"

"No."

"All right, then; brace up, and you'll see some lively slugging. We've got two red-hot amateurs aboard, and they mean business."

The man walked toward the group of his comrades, while Manton resumed his position on the rail. Whether or not he was pleased with the change of prospect, Mark could not tell. As for the young man, it made not the slightest difference to him whether they went to Weehawken or to Halifax, so long as he did not lose sight of the clerk. He did not express his ignorance of their destination, and so was not molested.

The boat plowed along, making excellent time in its sail up the river. There were fully a hundred men on board, and they made the trip interesting—for themselves. Liquor there was in plenty, and by the time they reached the Jersey shore, the sportsmen were as reckless as they were drunk. A few sober heads among them kept the party straight, however, and the landing was made with a fair degree of success.

On shore they were met by half-a-dozen men who had gone ahead to make arrangements, and were conducted by them for nearly a mile across the country. Manton fell in with the rest, and of course Mark followed him, taking care, however, that the clerk did not see him. The party stopped at last at a large building, which, in the darkness, looked like a deserted barn. The persons who had gone ahead threw open the doors and the rest trooped in.

Everything was in readiness for the battle.

In the center of the main apartment a ring had been roped off, and about it were arranged half-a-dozen tiers of seats. These were quickly occupied, and those who arrived late took standing-room at the ring-side. The room was lit up by half-a-dozen lanterns, suspended from the cross-beams of the roof.

Two young men, dressed in colored tights, with bared breasts and skin-tight gloves, climbed over the ropes, along with their trainers, the timekeeper and the referee. They shook hands, and the spectators appreciated the hypocrisy of the act. Then—

"Ready—go," shouted the referee, and in an instant the fighters were prancing, jumping, punching and pounding, to the intense delight of the spectators.

Mark took no interest in the fight, but he kept close behind Manton, and therefore saw nearly the whole of it. The pugilists were pretty evenly matched, and the battle was a close one. Many a dollar was put up on them, and for the first half-hour betting was about even. Then things began to get warm. The first blood had been spilled, and the sports were in their glory.

"Go it, Bob!"

"Hit fur his wind!"

"Part 'im in ther—"

"Look out fer his left!"

"That's a daisy!"

"Now, then, Tommy, old boy!"

The men shouted and yelled, sometimes in concert and sometimes alone, until the old structure in which they were gathered fairly shook. The more sensible of the party frequently cautioned their noisy comrades against so much applause, and several times yelled "silence," to quiet them down. But they would only be silent for a moment or two. Suddenly the fighters would start a brisk five minutes of pummeling each other, and the audience would rise to its feet, and, as one man, yell:

"Go it!"

And the performers did the best they could in "going it."

Nearly an hour passed. There had been fre-

quent interruptions, when time was called to rub down the fighters and pass around the drinks. Then, suddenly, a frightened hush came over everybody. The fighters slunk back to their corners, the referee and the timekeeper rivaled each other in getting outside the ring, and the spectators held their breath. From the entrance to the barn where the sentry had been stationed early in the fight came the ringing, warning cry:

"Police!"

And then that sentry was wafted quickly and silently across the Jersey shores toward a place of safety.

"Police!"

The guard at the other end now raised his voice in the startling announcement, and then he too set out for home and safety, leaving his companions in the barn to the mercy of the officers. Those of the sportsmen who were sober enough to appreciate the situation, leaped over each other in their struggle for the door. The others either went to sleep or remarked that the police might "be blanked" for all they cared.

But when they reached the entrance to the old structure, their hopes of escape were dashed to the ground, for they soon discovered that the barn was entirely surrounded by blue-coats.

Either their yelling had alarmed the Jersey City policemen, or else some one had "given the thing away," as one of the men expressed it.

The sergeant in command of the detachment of police appeared at the door and invited the sports to come out. And as they did so they were handcuffed together by the officers. Did you ever see a chain-gang? If you did you can appreciate the appearance of a hundred well-dressed men, each one handcuffed on one side to his neighbor.

"Dis is tough," one old-timer said, as he looked at his braceleted hands. "That wuz the finest fight I've seen sence—"

"This puts me in mind of the time when I wuz in Montany," said another, interrupting him. "Say, officer, will yer take ten apiece and let us go?"

The sergeant shook his head and went on with the work of binding his prisoners together.

When Manton was reached he attempted to explain something to the officer, but he was treated the same as the others and took his place in the line. Mark was dove-tailed in only a yard or two behind him and presently, when the procession was ready, they started down toward their boat.

It was a different crowd of people on the trip down the river from what it had been on the way up. Many of the sports went to sleep, and when finally the vessel drew into its dock, not a few of the prisoners had to be carried off to the station-house. There they were taken apart and ten or more placed in each cell to pass the night.

Mark was confined some distance from Manton, but the next morning when the procession was formed to pass into the court-room, he saw the clerk in the line ahead of him, still supporting the sachel.

The men were all taken before the police-justice, their names entered in his book, and then released on the "ten dollars or ten days" principle. Protestations and arguments alike were useless, and so the prisoners paid their fines and went home. Manton entered a most emphatic plea, and claimed to have been carried off against his wishes—but he paid the ten dollars just the same. So did Mark, and he followed the clerk out into the open air again, wondering where his strange adventures would carry him next.

Manton did not even stop to get breakfast in his anxiety to leave the city, but at once took an Elevated car up-town. Having failed to get out of it by way of water, he was now about to try the more effective and speedy railroad. He went up as far as Forty-second street, crossed over to Grand Central Depot and purchased a ticket on the nine o'clock Limited Express for Albany. Then he went out and ate breakfast, returning in time to catch the train.

On the way up a most surprising thing occurred.

CHAPTER XIII.

RALPH FRANKLIN AND HIS PRISONER.

YOUNG Ralph Franklin's interest in this case commenced with the disappearance of his sister. He was well acquainted with Mark Hatfield and knew of his engagement with Bonnie; but, unlike his father, he had nothing to say in opposition to it. Ralph was much surprised at his sister's sudden trip West, but still more so when Mark was indicted for robbing the bank. He at

once made an attempt at seeing his friend, but was restrained by his father, who now considered that all thoughts of matrimony between Bonnie and Mark would be discarded. Ralph received a letter from Bonnie soon after she reached Denver, telling him of her proposed elopement, and asking him to break the news to her father. But just at that time the bank robbery took place, and he at once set out for Denver.

On the train with him was Clarence Carthay, but Ralph took pains not to be discovered by him. Cal traveled out to Denver and at once went to the Weldon House.

But Ralph got there ahead of him.

Young Franklin had a long talk with his sister, in which he told her of the robbery, of Mark's arrest and of his suspicions regarding Carthay. In the end he advised her not to alarm Cal, but to see for what reason he had come out there and to do what she could to get him back to New York.

The next day Carthay called to see her. He did not, of course, know of Ralph's previous visit. He proceeded to give her an account of the bank-robbery, of his having seen Mark at the safe of the janitor's evidence and of his own trip to Denver on purpose to see and comfort her. He said that Hatfield was as good as a convict unless certain evidence regarding the case was withheld. In a word, he told her that his testimony regarding the matter would send Mark to prison for a long term of years. Of course he didn't like to furnish any such testimony as that, seeing as Hatfield was a very dear friend of his, but then he was obliged to do his duty, unless—

It took him much longer to reach that "unless" than it has the author, but he did so finally, and concluded his alternative in a burst of eloquence expressing his devotion for Miss Hatfield and of his intense, constant, everlasting longing after her hand. Then in a business-like way he agreed to swear to all the lies she could suggest, and withdraw all his former testimony in relation to Mark's having robbed the bank, in case she would marry him. He even suggested that his influence with the bank-janitor was such that he could be induced to recollect certain facts that would tend to place the young prisoner in a better light. It took him all of one afternoon to get over this, but in the end the interview was satisfactory. Bonnie told him to call again in a day or two, and in the mean time she would think it over. She told her brother the next day what had occurred, and he advised her to accept Cal's offer of marriage as a means of getting him in her power. She could suggest that the ceremony be postponed until after he had done all he could for Mark, and by that time Ralph expected to have evidence enough to convict the wily scoundrel.

And Cal consented to everything. He was willing to have Bonnie make all the arrangements, so long as he came out all right in the end. He was willing to go to New York or to Honolulu with her, and let the marriage service lay over until after he effected young Hatfield's release, or, at least, did all he could toward that end. So they prepared to go East together, and Ralph, seeing that Bonnie perfectly understood the situation, left for New York to see how that end of the case was getting along.

About this time Manton stepped on the stage. Cal, while in Denver, did not stop at the Weldon House, but his frequent visits there made him acquainted with the clerk. Somehow, thieves get to understand each other more quickly than honest men, and before long Cal and Manton were getting together a scheme to rob the hotel of the fifty thousand dollars which its proprietor had just drawn from the bank. Manton himself was too much of a coward to do more than propose the thing, and Cal would never get an opportunity of doing the work. So together they settled upon Bonnie as the most agreeable person to do the stealing; not, of course, with her knowledge of the fact, for Miss Franklin was an honest girl, and would never lend her aid or consent to their nefarious work. But, just the same, she did the necessary work, and in a way that would have been a credit to a professional thief. One day, a short time before their intended departure for New York, Cal came to her room. He had a sober and somewhat frightened look on his face, and she was instantly convinced that something serious had happened.

"Bonnie," he began, "have you got time to do a little service for me?"

"That depends," she answered.

"Would you mind going over to Weldon's room on the floor below this, and take from his desk a small sachel?"

"I most certainly wouldn't do it," she said, emphatically.

"But if you knew that it was mine?" he asked. "Would you then?"

"I might."

"Then it's a bargain!"

"But why don't you go and get it yourself, or ask Mr. Weldon for it?"

"Because I don't want him to know I've got it."

"Why not?"

"Never mind why. I let him have it to keep for me when I first came to Denver. There's a lot of money in it, and I must have it to-day."

A sudden thought flashed across Bonnie's mind. Could not this be the stolen money? And if it was, had she not better restore it to him now that he was going back home?

"I'll do it," she said simply. "If you are sure there is nothing wrong about it, and—"

"There isn't," Cal interposed.

"And you'll tell me afterward what all the secrecy is about?"

"I will."

"Then you wait here until I see what I can do. If I'm caught you'll have to stand up for me."

"Of course."

Bonnie secured the sachel, and on examining it was convinced that the fifty thousand dollars it contained was the money which had been stolen from her father's bank. She didn't know then that the stolen fortune had been in bonds. She gave the sachel to Cal without letting him know that she had opened it, and they at once set out for Gotham. Arriving there Cal secured for her a room in a respectable down-town boarding-house, and took the apartments in "133" for himself. She immediately let her brother know of her presence in the city, and although he decidedly objected to having her spend her time in such a place, he clearly saw that it was the best thing to do under the circumstances. But to make it a little more pleasant for the girl, he induced one of her young lady friends, Aime Warder, to stay with her. Bonnie had learned in one of her visits to "133" the location of the sachel in the chimney and at once confided that piece of information to both Aime and her brother. Miss Warder's disastrous visit to the house was the result of her own determination to get the stolen money. How it ended the reader already knows.

We have brought the story up to this point so as to properly understand the adventures which later befell Ralph.

When Kid Keen left him to guard Cal as a prisoner in his room in "133," he had no doubt but that the job would be an easy one. The man was handcuffed and unarmed, and the temporary guard of him did not look like a very difficult matter.

But it was.

The detective had scarcely left the room before the man on the lounge began to make himself heard.

"This is a double-blinded outrage," he growled, sitting up and shaking his manacled hands. "If once I get loose, Franklin, I'll kill you, so help me God. You may think you've got the upper hand now, but—"

"Keep still," said Ralph.

"But if you stay here a few minutes longer, I'll bet you'll regret it. There'll be some of my friends in here shortly, and if they catch you, I wouldn't give much for what's left of you."

"Then I guess I'd better go."

"You will if you know when you're well off."

"And take you with me."

"What?"

"I said that we'd take a walk up-town together."

"I won't go."

"Oh, yes you will."

"If you touch me, Franklin, I'll— Hold on!"

The young man gripped his prisoner by the back of the neck and started him with more force than grace toward the door.

"I'll kill—" shouted Cal.

"Shut up, now!" interposed Ralph, sternly.

"Walk along straight, and none of your infernal nonsense on the way, or I'll shake the life out of you."

He held his prisoner firmly and marched him out into the hall and down the stairs. Whenever Cal made an attempt to halt or speak, Ralph would increase the pressure on the back of his neck, and he would stride along with increased speed. When they reached the street, Franklin turned up-town, intending to take his man to the Police Headquarters. He feared that Cal's reference to his friends calling upon him was no idle threat, and so had taken this mode of circumventing that scheme.

All of a sudden the prisoner made a dead halt, so suddenly that he almost loosened Ralph's grip.

"Go on!" commanded the latter.

"Where are you going to take me?"

"To Police Headquarters."

"On Mulberry street?"

"Yes."

For some reason or other, this piece of information seemed to give Cal great satisfaction, for, instead of lagging behind, he seemed anxious to proceed as rapidly as possible. They turned into Mulberry street and walked northward, Franklin keeping a firm grip on his prisoner for fear that he would escape in the darkness. They were passing in front of a dimly-lit basement saloon, when suddenly, without the slightest warning, Cal leaped headlong down the steps, dragging his captor after him.

"Help!" he roared.

The next instant the door was open, and a pair of hands dragged both men inside.

"Hello, Cal, what's up?"

"Quick, Bill—this man has got me handcuffed—slug him!" shouted the captive, while Ralph jammed him up in one corner and turned to face his new enemies.

Cal was evidently well known there, for all the men seemed to be acquainted with him. It was an exceedingly unfortunate thing for his captor to have chosen Mulberry street through which to escort his prisoner.

The saloon in which they had so unexpectedly entered was a barren-looking place, with a plain wooden bar on one side. As they came in, the red-faced bartender was arranging a piece of raw beefsteak over his discolored eye, and explaining to a more or less battered group of men in front of him how he "cum ter git licked." When he caught sight of Cal, his blood was up again.

"It's an insult!" he cried, coming toward Ralph, while the man who had dragged the two inside divested himself of his coat and vest. "What do you mean by carryin' that gentleman around in this style?"

Ralph did not answer him. He saw that he had gotten himself into a pretty bad box, and he immediately made arrangements for getting out of it. Throwing Cal forcibly down on the floor, he faced his assailants.

"He ain't nothin' to ther t'uther 'un," commented a tough-looking man, whose large glass scarf-pin was stuck into the lapel of his coat, owing to the loss of his neck-wear in the recent *melée*. "I tell you, boys, we're gittin' our share of fight to-night—eh?"

"We air that," replied another. "But I wonder what Cal hez been doin' now. I heard he'd gone West."

"Raisin' Cain with the young feller's sister, I s'pose. Cal allers wuz a bad egg, an' sence he's got that job in ther bank—wa-al, boys, ef I hed that job, it'd be hard work they'd hev ketchin' me arter I learned the combination uv ther safe."

By this time the men were in readiness to avenge the dastardly outrage which had been perpetrated on their friend. The red-faced bartender, as usual, led in the assault, and—also as usual—was the first one to get knocked out. He retired behind the bar to get more raw beefsteak for his other optic, while his comrades dragged Cal out in the middle of the floor, and one of them produced a bunch of keys of all sizes and shapes, with which to unlock the steel bracelets. Half a dozen others were engaged in an exceedingly lively battle, the result of an attempt to lay out young Mr. Franklin. Ralph was an amateur boxer of no mean order, and he could hit both hard and often when he felt inclined.

And you may be sure that on this occasion he was not at all backward!

In fact, as the man with the glass scarf-pin afterward remarked to a friend, he was almost as good as the other one all over, but "considerable wuss in parts." But although Ralph made a gallant fight, he was finally forced to beat a retreat or stay and get an unmerciful thrashing. He had as his opponents a half-dozen of the toughest men of lower New York—fellows who live to fight, and who would rather get into a rum-pus at any time than to eat a square meal. And it was no wonder that he finally decided that the saloon was getting too warm for him.

During the battle he had worked his way around to the rear of the room by keeping his back against the wall, and, just when the fight was hottest, he ran through the rear entrance, the door of which had been broken from its hinges, into the back room, up the stairs and into the long, narrow passageway. He did not

stop to see if he was pursued, but on, turning frequent corners, and every minute to run into further trouble he reached the open air again.

He saw in front of him the entrance to a hidden dance-house, and as that appeared the only outlet to the court-yard, he walked toward it, stumbling over the body of the murdered thief as he did so.

A shudder passed over him when he saw the corpse. He knew the general character of the locality he was in, and as he entered the hall leading to the bail-room, his right hand rested on the butt of his revolver. He passed through it, and stood in the doorway of the brilliantly-lighted apartment.

As his eyes swept about the room, he suddenly staggered back with a cry of surprise.

Within fifty feet of where he stood he caught sight of Kid Keen lying on the floor with four men on top of him, all struggling desperately for the possession of a small paper package which the detective clutched in his right hand.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MEETING ON BOARD THE EXPRESS.

MARK followed Manton upon the train for Albany and took a seat in a parlor-car only a short distance behind him. He had given up all hopes of obtaining the sachel by any other means than outright theft. He might call an officer when they reached their destination and try to have the clerk put under arrest, but he could prove nothing, and without proof of his guilt, the man could not be held.

So Hatfield resolved to get possession of the sachel by some means, and then return to the city. He cared but little what became of Manton afterward, since he was not the real thief.

The nine o'clock Limited Express from Grand Central makes no stops between New York City and Albany, and is the fastest running train in the State. From the capital it runs westward to Buffalo, Cleveland, Chicago and St. Louis, so that Manton could easily get away from Gotham if he so desired. Mark had been able to purchase a ticket to Albany, but was now getting embarrassed financially. He had but a few dollars at starting, and his fine in consequence of the prize-fight, the car-fare and other incidental expenses about used that up. It behooved him, therefore, to get possession of the sachel before the train drew up to Albany.

For that purpose he worked his way forward until he was seated just behind the clerk, pulling his hat down over his eyes to partially conceal his identity in case Manton should glance in his direction.

But the clerk was not at all inclined to look behind him. He did not have the remotest idea that he had been followed ever since leaving "133" the night before. So he settled himself down in the cushions, crossed his legs, and watched the beautiful scenery without as the train sped rapidly along.

The distance up the river had been half gone over when a most surprising thing occurred. It caused Mark much astonishment and the clerk not a little alarm as well.

The car door ahead of them suddenly opened, and no less a person than Cal Carthay strode in!

He had left the Mulberry street saloon at once upon being released by his friends, and being very desirous of leaving the city as quietly and speedily as possible had gone up to the Grand Central Depot and taken the Limited Express for the West. He did not know what had become of the sachel containing the hundred thousand dollars, and alternately suspected Manton and the detective of the theft. Of one thing he was certain. It was gone, and his longer stay in Gotham would doubtless result unpleasantly for him.

When he passed through the train of cars in search of the smoker, his eyes lighted on Manton, and from him on the sachel on his lap.

"Dick Manton!" he gasped.

"Cal, by gad!" groaned the clerk.

"What are you doing here?" demanded Carthay.

"Going to Albany."

"What for?"

"To get out of New York."

"Brilliant idea," Cal sneered.

"And what are you doing here, may I ask?"

"Going to the same place for the same reason."

"When did you leave '133'?"

"I got there some time after I lost you, while running away from the house in which Bonnie was stopping."

Cal took a seat next to the clerk and eyed the sachel affectionately as he continued:

The Denver Detective in New York

"pretty much frightened then, for I the whole blanked police force of New onto us."

"You know who it really was?"

"Only them two youngsters—Mark Hatfield and Ralph Franklin."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Then we were foolish to run away as we did—but let that pass. I missed you in the darkness, and finally, when I got to my rooms, what do you suppose I found?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Manton, to whom nothing was very surprising just then.

"That blanked rascal of a young Franklin was lookin' up ther chimney after the sachel."

"But he didn't get it."

"No."

"I'd been there previously," said the clerk with a short laugh.

"So I see."

"But you didn't know it then?"

"No; and of course I went for Ralph in great shape. We had a fight and I got the best of it. I managed to lay him out finally, and then I looked for the sachel. It wasn't there."

"No," replied Manton, "it was over in Hoboken, or some other God-forsaken place in New Jersey, taking in a prize-fight by that time."

"But just as I made the discovery that it was gone, something else happened."

"You had quite a time of it."

"I did indeed, before I got through. I happened to open that closet door—you know where it was, in the side of the room."

"Yes."

"Well, I was going in there after a bottle of whisky, when—whiz! a living earthquake inside bu'sted me a crack in the jaw, and I keeled over like a stone wall."

Mark came pretty near recognizing by this description the personality of the earthquake.

"Must have been pretty strong whisky," said Manton.

"Whisky nothin'! It was a man inside there, and the way he laid me out would have done credit to John L. Sullivan himself. Just as soon as I struck the floor he jumped on me with both feet, wrestled me around like a rubber Indian, and finally laid me down on the lounge with handcuffs on. Oh, he was a daisy, he was. I fit fer all I was worth, but to no purpose. He was too many fer me, and I had ter give up. Then he got young Franklin on his feet again, and set him to watchin' me while he went out to git the police force and carry me away to prison."

Both Manton and Hatfield were interested listeners to this story. Cal recounted his adventures in leaving the house, his escape by jumping into the Mulberry street saloon, and his coming up to get a train out of the city.

"I didn't know whether you had taken the sachel or not," he said, in conclusion. "But I didn't have the slightest expectation of meeting you again so soon. Lucky, wasn't it?"

"Yes," said Manton, hollowly.

Then he, in turn, related his adventures from the time he had secured the sachel until he reached the train.

Having thus settled these matters between themselves to the mutual satisfaction of both, Cal started on the next subject.

"We've got the money now all right, but where shall we go with it? I'm willing to give up the blanked girl, since she's caused all this trouble. I believe she went back on us, anyway."

"I think so, myself."

"Have you thought of any place to go to and settle down for awhile?"

"No."

"Neither have I. I was so much interested in getting out of the city, that I didn't care where I went."

"Same here."

"We might go to Montreal."

"Yes."

"Or some other place in Canada, and stay until the storm blows over."

"I'm in for anything that's safe. I've had enough of this wandering around. We've got one hundred thousand dollars here, and I believe in settling down to enjoy it."

"So do I."

"And if you're willing to go to Montreal—"

"I am."

"Then we'll go straight on there. That's the safest place, and a pretty decent city to live in, I've heard."

"Yes, I believe so."

"And how about dividing the boodle?"

"Even."

"Each take half?"

"Yes."

"That suits me. Fifty thousand dollars apiece ain't nothin' to laugh at, eh?"

"I should think not."

"We might do some speculating on it."

"Of course."

"Or buy some property. Why not invest some of it in a good house in Montreal? We could both live together."

"I'm willing."

"That's much better than hanging out at a hotel, as long as you've got the money to do it with, and we ain't likely to get embarrassed in that way."

"No."

"And I suppose we'll get into good company up there. We won't be the only thieves in Canada, eh? And—"

"Hush."

"What's the matter?"

"You musn't mention that word here. Some one might hear you."

"All right."

And then the two went in again, planning what they were to do with their ill-gotten wealth. Manton produced a pencil and paper, and as the train sped on he wrote and figured with Cal's assistance, until they had invested about ninety thousand dollars' worth of the sachel's contents in various proposed speculations.

"The rest," said the clerk, "we'll keep about us for loose change, eh, Cal?"

"Yes," said his companion. "Of course—just as you say."

Mark was mystified to account for the extra fifty thousand dollars. He was certain that the bank had not been robbed of the amount they were discussing, unless a second robbery had taken place since his confinement. His plan of stealing the sachel was now more difficult, than before, since it would be carefully guarded by both men.

Then he was afraid that they would separate the fortune and each take half, or make some other arrangement whereby it would not be so conveniently arranged for his purloining it. But he could do nothing more nor less than follow them until something turned up. The only thing he feared was that his money would give out in the mean time.

"You hav'n't any idea who it was hiding in the closet, have you?" asked Manton, when he had concluded his visionary speculations.

"No. I never saw the man before last night."

"How did he look?"

Cal described him as well as he could, but the clerk could not recall any such person.

"And, by the way, old man," Carthay said, "I wish you'd let me have one or two of those large bills we got out in Denver. To tell the truth I'm nearly strapped."

"I will, with pleasure," replied Manton. "It might be safer to divide the whole thing here and each take half. It's rather risky to carry so much about in the sachel."

"I think it would be a good idea," said Cal, who was anxious to get his grip on the bank-notes.

"Then we'll do it right here. You take the papers you got from the bank and I'll take old Weldon's bills."

"I'd rather have those," Cal answered. "I don't know much about cashin' them bonds."

"Neither do I."

"And it might be dangerous to try to pass 'em off just yet."

"Oh, no. Government bonds, you know, are as good as gold anywhere."

"Well, then, pitch up a cent to see who takes the cash, and who runs the risk of cashing the papers."

Manton produced a coin and flipped it in the air.

"Heads for choice," said Cal, before it struck the floor.

Both men bent over it to see the result.

"Heads it is," said the clerk. "You have your usual luck in such things. I'll give you the fifty thousand in cash and take the rest myself. I'd just as lieve have it, because those bonds are interest-bearing, and may be worth considerable more than their face value."

Manton reached down on the floor where he had set the sachel a few minutes before, in order to use his paper and pencil, and drew it tenderly on his lap.

"It's a rough-looking concern to contain so much money, ain't it?" commented Cal.

"Yes, but you can't always tell from the outside what a thing contains. Appearances are always deceitful and—"

He had opened the sachel and thrust his hand inside, bringing out, an instant later—a brick!

Mark never could describe coherently afterward just what was said and done about that time!

CHAPTER XV.

RALPH TO THE RESCUE.

"It's Kid Keen!"

Ralph could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes when he stood there at the entrance of the ball-room and saw the detective struggling with his four opponents. How he could have gotten into that place, Franklin could not imagine, but a second glance assured him that Keen was there in all flesh and blood, and that he was in need of immediate assistance. His antagonists were so much in the majority that he could make no adequate resistance, and he began to regret that he had attempted, single-handed, to get back the package of 'greenbacks.

But, all of a sudden, help came to the under man. A sort of human whirlwind, starting from the door, burst in upon them. Fists flew about in all directions, and almost before the poor men knew exactly what had happened, they were thrown bodily from their victim. Keen was not slow in getting on his feet, you may be sure, and both he and Ralph at once drew their revolvers.

"Stand back!"

Their four assailants caught the gleam of steel, and then retreated.

Keen returned the greenbacks to his pockets, and with their revolvers raised, the two men backed out of the door, through the hall, and once more into the open air.

"How on earth did you come here?" the detective asked, when they saw that the men were not pursuing them.

"That's just what I was going to ask you," Ralph said.

"I came in to find a man who picked my pockets of the stolen greenbacks."

"Through the saloon on Mulberry street?"

"Yes."

"And I came in the same way because I couldn't help it. I had a pretty lively fight there with some tough-looking men, and ran out the back way to escape them. I wound up at the dance-house."

"You got in a muss there, too, eh?"

"Indeed I did."

"Same here. I had a nice little rumpus there all by myself."

The detective told of his being robbed, and of the results of his search for the thief, and Ralph narrated his adventures after having been dragged inside.

"I suppose Cal has escaped by this time," he concluded. "But I can assure you that I did my best to hold him."

"I don't doubt it," returned Keen. "But it doesn't matter greatly whether we get Carthay in our hands at once or not, now that we have got the stolen money."

"No, I suppose not."

"But we'll go up and see Byrnes now, and he will doubtless be able to put some men on his track. There's where you were going with your prisoner, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Strange we should both tumble into the same hole. But it was very fortunate on my account. I went for those fellows just as soon as I saw the stolen money, and I didn't stop to think how many of them there were. I was getting the worst of it when you came in."

"I'm glad I did, even if Cal has escaped. But where are you going now?"

"To Police Headquarters first."

"But afterward?"

"I shall get a good night's snooze, and then start for the West. I want to get back to Denver and see Weldon, now that I have the money he lost. I'm anxious to tell him what you have told me about Bonnie. He thinks she's a thief, you know."

"I suppose he does. But, poor girl, she thought it was the other fifty thousand she was handling."

"I see."

"But if you go to Denver now, you'll be back soon?"

"On the very next train East, if possible. I just want to see Weldon, and have a short talk with him."

By this time they had reached the corner of Houston street, where stands the handsome marble structure used as Police Headquarters by Gotham's minions of the law. They went inside and held a short conference with the chief inspector, and then they parted, Ralph going to get his sister from the boarding-house further down-town, and Keen going up to the

Grand Central Depot, to see when the next train left for the West.

"Good-by, old man," Franklin said, as they shook hands. "Come right back to our house when you reach the city again. By that time we'll have everything settled, I guess, and young Hatfield will be a free man once more."

"I hope so," answered the detective, "and I hope to take in the wedding on my return."

"I guess you will."

"Good-by."

And then Keen caught an up-town car, and was soon bowling along up Fourth avenue. He reached Forty-second street, and entered the Grand Central Station, and was soon on his way back to Denver, seated comfortably in the parlor car of the Limited Express.

A short time before the train arrived at Albany, the detective lit a cigar and started forward toward the smoker.

Keen was just about to enter the car ahead of the one in which he had been riding, when he stopped suddenly with his hand on the door-knob.

Not ten feet in front of him sat Cal and Manton, the latter just raising to his lap the sachel in which the detective had placed the brick.

"They haven't discovered the loss of the money yet," Keen said to himself, standing in the vestibule and watching the two men through the window in the door, "and are now getting out of the city with the impression that the sachel contains a hundred thousand dollars. What a time there will be—Hello, they're going to open it now!"

It was even so. The clerk pressed the spring on the sachel's lock, and thrust his hand inside, bringing out an ordinary, every-day, commonplace red brick.

Sachel and contents were both dropped to the floor together.

A burst of profanity from Cal, and a blank, stupid stare from Manton, followed.

"Gone!" said the clerk, hoarsely.

"Gone!" roared Carthay, springing to his feet, and seizing his companion by the throat. "And who took it, you fool? Speak quick!"

Manton squirmed and trembled in the savage grasp of the angry Cal, and his face began to grow purple.

"I—I don't know," he gasped. "Let go my—my neck!"

With a final wrench that almost took away the clerk's breath, Carthay threw him back into his chair with force enough to break his back.

"Where's that money?" he cried, paying no attention to the startled looks of the other passengers. "Tell me what you've done with it!"

"It's gone!" was all Manton could say, while he gently stroked his injured throat. "I don't know, I really don't know who took it. I thought it was there. I thought—"

"You lie!" hissed Cal, overcome with rage. "You've got that money, and you'll have to fork it over or suffer the consequences. Where is it?"

"I don't know. I put it there last night—I mean I thought I put—Oh, I don't know what I mean," groaned the poor clerk, in his terror forgetting where he had obtained the sachel.

Cal grabbed Manton by the throat and fairly yanked him to his feet. The poor wretch was too much frightened to resist or shout for help, and he was entirely at the mercy of the enraged man.

Mark, who, during the dispute, had retained his seat behind them, saw that something serious was likely to happen, and sprang to his feet to restrain Carthay, if possible.

But he was too late.

Cal choked Manton until the clerk's face turned purple and his eyes protruded, and then, with a savage push, sent him headlong from him.

Crash!

The clerk struck one of the large panes of glass in the side of the car, burst it into a thousand pieces, and flew out—off the swiftly flying car!

A dozen of the passengers sprang to their feet to seize the maddened man, but before they could reach him the front door was thrown open, and Kid Keen bounded in. With one stride he was at Cal's side, his strong hand grasping his arm.

An instant later the murderer lay struggling and cursing on the floor, the detective's knee upon his breast, and a pair of steel bracelets around his wrists and ankles.

The alarmed passengers gathered about them, talking and asking questions, but as the train was just drawing into Albany, Keen was able to keep his prisoner by himself.

"I have a warrant for this man's arrest," he said, quietly, placing Cal in a chair, and taking the next one for himself, "and being a regularly commissioned detective I have a right to serve it. I will see that he gets into a prison cell before night."

Just then he caught sight of Mark Hatfield and spoke to him at once.

"Isn't your name Hatfield?" he asked.

"Yes," said Mark.

"And you were following these two men?"

"Yes—to get the sachel."

"I thought so."

"And who are you?"

"A detective working up the case. Will you help me get this fellow off the train here?"

"With pleasure."

"I just happened along in time. Cal was so enraged at the loss of the bonds and money that he was nearly crazy."

"And I was nearly as much surprised as he. Where do you suppose the bonds went?"

"They're in the hands of Inspector Byrnes now."

"Good. Then I was following the brick all the time. But who put that there?"

"I did."

"When?"

"I haven't got time to explain now, but I will later. You are cleared of the robbery, though, and we've got a clear case against this fellow for that—and something worse now, I suppose. If he doesn't swing, it'll be strange."

When the train came to a halt, Mark and the detective carried their prisoner out to the depot, where a patrol was quickly summoned and Cal was carried to the city prison. Keen telegraphed to Inspector Byrnes the result of his trip, and said that he would return to Gotham with his prisoner the next day.

Late that same afternoon the dead body of Dick Manton was brought in by some men working along the railroad track.

CHAPTER XVI.

FROM NEW YORK TO DENVER.

A WEEK later Kid Keen might have been seen walking up the hill toward the Weldon House, with the same independent, free-and-easy stride of his former visit. He entered the hotel and walked to the desk, behind which a new and better-mannered clerk presided.

"Is Weldon in?" asked Keen.

"Yes—up-stairs in his room."

Keen ascended the stairs and made his way to the apartment in which he had held the conversation with the hotel proprietor before leaving for Gotham.

"Hello, Jack," he exclaimed, catching sight of Weldon at his desk.

"Kid Keen, the Keener!" returned the other, rising and extending his hand. "So you're back already?"

"Yes," said the detective. "I've finished the job."

"Everything wound up, eh?"

"Yes, and here's your sachel, with the fifty thousand dollars untouched."

The detective held out the article and Weldon examined it.

"The very same!" he exclaimed. "Keen, you're a dandy! And the girl—is she behind the bars?"

"Not by a long shot," replied Keen, consulting his watch. "I'm going back to Gotham on the late train to-night, so as to be in time for her marriage next Tuesday evening. I promised her I wouldn't miss that if I could help it."

"Then she didn't take the money?"

The detective nodded.

"Yes, she took it."

"And you're going to forgive her for the theft?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you say so, I suppose it's all right."

"Of course it is. She didn't mean to take anything belonging to you, and the real thief is now in the Tombs in New York. His right-hand man is dead."

"Well, of all things!" cried Weldon. "Tell me the story."

And Keen proceeded to do so. He recounted all that which is already known to the reader, and concluded his story by telling what they had done with Cal after reaching Albany—which, to complete his veracious record, we must recount:

As soon as the detective's message reached Inspector Byrnes the next morning, he sent a half-dozen men up to assist Keen in bringing the prisoner to the city. Cal was conveyed thither, and a jury impanneled over Manton's

corpse found him guilty of murder at their first sitting. Mark's lawyer moved for a dismissal of his case, and the motion was granted. And then, for the first time since his imprisonment, Mark met his father and received from his lips a full account of Carthay's villainy.

Bonnie was at once brought to her home by her brother, and Aimie Warder—later Mrs. Ralph Franklin—was also restored to her parents after the exciting adventures in "133."

A new day was set for Bonnie and Mark's nuptials, and this time the old gentleman showed no disposition to object. In fact, he expressed a sneaking sort of approbation by advancing his prospective son-in-law to the position of cashier of the Occidental Bank.

Having seen all this come to pass, the detective returned to Denver.

"Wonderful—wonderful!" exclaimed Weldon, when Keen had finished, and both gentlemen were leaning back in their chairs and enjoying a couple of choice Havanas. "Do you know, I've been hoping ever since you've been gone that Bonnie wouldn't be found guilty. And—and I say, Keen!"

"Well?"

"Do—do you suppose she'd care if I went to the wedding?"

"She'd be delighted to have you."

"Think so?"

"I'm sure of it."

"Then I'll go. I'm sorry I ever thought of suspecting her, but then you know I could hardly help it. That scoundrel of a Manton I never thought of; he was always such a meek, sneaking sort of a fellow."

"Well, he's got his deserts," replied the detective. "I don't know as I ever saw a worse death than his. It isn't very pleasant to be hurled to death from a flying Express-train through a plate-glass window."

"No, I suppose it isn't exactly so agreeable as to be put to death by electricity, which I think you said was to be his murderer's fate."

"Yes, I believe so."

"And you really mean to go back to New York to-night?"

"Yes."

"Then let's get supper now, and I'll prepare to go with you."

They started down-stairs, and on the way Weldon suddenly halted, and slapped his companion on the back.

"I clean forgot one thing," he said.

"What's that?" asked Keen.

"To pay you for your work."

For reply, the detective thrust his hand in his pocket and pulled out a roll of greenbacks of large size.

"You see those?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, I won all that in the German sport-rooms in Gotham, of which I was speaking. I had to play the bank to keep up appearances, and came out 'way ahead."

"That may all be," replied Weldon. "But it doesn't settle my indebtedness to you."

And any one who knows Jack Weldon of Denver will believe me when I say that half the money Keen recovered from Cal and Manton was deposited in a bank to his credit.

That night Keen and the hotel proprietor took the late train for the East, and arrived in Gotham in ample time to take in the double wedding at the handsome residence of the Franklins on Gramercy Park.

I am tempted to add this little incident because Keen himself told it to me the other day.

During his stay in the city he had occasion to pass "133," and was hailed from the basement by his friend, the hunchback pawnbroker.

"Holt on, my fr'ent," he called, rapping on the dirty window-pane. "Coomme down here."

Keen descended.

"You vhas der man dolt preak my door, eh?"

"Yes," replied the detective. "I believe I did something of the sort."

"Unt shlide town mit der tumb-vaiter?"

"Yes."

"Vell, you owe me a quarter of a tollar more ash you pay me for de tamage done. Dolt door cost me feefty cends more den—"

Keen interrupted him by settling this little financial matter satisfactorily to the hunchback.

"You're a shentleman, sir," answered that worthy. "Now you vant to go oop an' play mit de pank—no?"

"No," said Keen. "Not to-day, thank you. I'm my own banker now."

THE END.

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BEADLE AND ADAMS, Publishers.

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